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THE  
COMPLETE JOURNALIST

A Study of the  
Principles and Practice of  
Newspaper Making

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# SUB-EDITING

A BOOK MAINLY FOR  
YOUNG JOURNALISTS

*By*

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EDITORIAL STAFF OF "THE TIMES," 1914-1934

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*FOURTH EDITION*



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TO  
THE LADY  
WHO FOR MANY YEARS HAS CHEERFULLY  
ENDURED THE SACRIFICES IMPOSED ON  
A JOURNALIST'S WIFE  
AND BEEN  
MY LOYAL HELPMATE

Who once hath stood through the loaded hour  
Ere, roaring like the gale,  
The Harrild and the Hoe devour  
Their league-long paper bale,  
And has lit his pipe in the morning calm  
That follows the midnight stress—  
He hath sold his heart to the old Black Art  
We call the Daily Press.

RUDYARD KIPLING, "The Press."

I believe in the power of the Press. I believe in the potentiality of the Press. I believe even more in the responsibility of the Press; and I believe most of all that the British Press is the best and cleanest in the world.

LORD ROSEBERY in 1913.

## PREFACE

### TO FOURTH EDITION

THE end of the second World War leaves the printing industry, and of course the newspaper press, suffering from an acute shortage of labour and materials. The issue of a fourth edition of this book is therefore a formidable task. But there is not a single copy of the third edition left for sale, and there is a definite demand for literature on journalism. Young men now serving in the Allied Forces are largely thinking of a career, and many turn to journalism. Hence there is a real need for vocational books, among which I am happy to realise there is a definite place for SUB-EDITING, which remains to-day, I believe, the only British textbook solely devoted to that department of journalism. Once again in war-time the sub-editor has proved his value and, indeed, indispensability. At the present time the competent sub-editor is "worth his weight in gold."

No re-casting of the book on a large scale is feasible. Fortunately it is unnecessary, for, broadly speaking, the essentials of sub-editorial work here described stand good to-day, though method and technique are liable, as always, to fluctuation. When this book was first published local papers in important areas of the provinces were vigorously contesting the assault of the "chain" papers, controlled from London. This form of competition has died down—in war-time its extension has, of course, been impossible. Will it revive when paper is once more

abundant? During the last five years the provincial papers have lengthened their cords and strengthened their stakes. The pull of home town news has been very evident among our soldiers abroad, and the daily and weekly papers in the country have proved their value in propaganda campaigns of all kinds.

As to the "Legal Pitfalls" of Chapter VII, there has been no new legislation, apart from the emergency measures of war; and the demand for reform in the law of libel still remains unsatisfied. Judgments in libel cases give the most illuminating guidance to the sub-editor. For example, in 1942 a case was decided on the question of privilege in "statements made in discharge of a duty." A borough council issued with its agenda a committee report defamatory of employees in relation to thefts of petrol. It was held that there was no common interest between the council and the ratepayers which would warrant such publication at a preliminary stage of the investigation, and the occasion was therefore not privileged. Therefore, sub-editors, beware of the council agenda, and the good stories sometimes found therein! When the council deals with the subject in public meeting a fair and accurate report is privileged. "The Pressman and the Law," by G. F. L. Bridgman (Hon. Standing Counsel to the National Union of Journalists), published by Pitman in 1938, is a valuable and concise guide.

So many innovations have been tried in headlines and the make-up of pages (Chapters V

and VI) that anything really new is rare, but all who are bent on sub-editing should keep a watchful eye and exercise their own ingenuity.

F. J. MANSFIELD.

*December, 1945.*

## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

AMONG the many books that have been published about journalism there is not one, so far as I can discover, devoted solely to the art and craft of sub-editing. That fact, and the desire to do something in permanent form to help the beginner, are my warrant for this study of a growing and highly-specialized branch of our profession. I can only hope that this book will be judged worthy of filling the gap, and that the style of treatment adopted will prove helpful. My method is just that of a sub-editor talking about his work to a sympathetic and interested audience. As a class, sub-editors are not vocal, much less vociferous, about their province, and yet it is surprising to find, on sitting down to research and reflection, how much there is to be said in the way of information, advice, and warning to the inexperienced. I have written quite a big "piece" based on nearly 45 years' work, but even so the book is suggestive rather than exhaustive. Sometimes I write as we talk, using colloquial terms without footnote or glossary, on the assumption that my readers have been long enough within range of the smell of printer's ink to understand them.

Journalism is highly dynamic and, although some principles stand firm, methods are constantly changing, and there is always room for bright ideas of the new day. The nimble mind finds an ever-open door for fresh, attractive forms in arraying stories, planning pages, and making-up. My aim has been to show how



far, and in what way, ideas have developed up to this year 1931. As far as one can see, the sub-editor is destined to hold an increasingly responsible place in the editorial hierarchy.

This book must not be taken as an inducement to young persons to enter journalism. Unhappily the field of employment is becoming more restricted owing to newspaper amalgamations. Although the idealists—may their shadow never grow less!—do not cease to preach the doctrine of the responsibility of the journalist to State and City (the garlands, I notice, are very scarce) we are discovering that our calling, like industry at large, is subject to economic law. “Rationalization” is spelling tragedy to many. It would be for the good of the public, and of the journalist, if the old competitive and independent days were restored. But, as things are, I must not be regarded as throwing out invitations to the youth of the country to enter journalism as a road to material success. Rather my purpose is to give counsel to those who have already made their choice and are fixed in journalism for good or ill. Even in these dark and depressing days there is a demand for good sub-editors.

I am neither counsel nor witness in the action of “Reporter *v.* Sub-editor.” In reality I do not regard it any more seriously than I do the case of “Bardell *v.* Pickwick.” But it will be evident that, in my view, sub-editing demands greater all-round knowledge, experience, and capacity for sound judgment than does reporting. Hence the time-honoured notion, that appointment to the sub-editorial desk is “promotion,” is true as far as the great majority of reporters are concerned.

Although the book deals with British journalism, some little attention has been given to America, to which we owe so many textbooks and original ideas. America makes its distinctive contribution to world

journalism, and its newspapers are worthy of the study of every craftsman. It is equally true that America admits its debt to the British tradition. The "copy reader" in America, like his British *alter ego* the sub-editor, holds a key position.

In the chapter on the legal side of our work I have tried to clothe the skeleton of doctrine with the flesh and blood of living reality by quoting what judges have said and what juries have done in actual issues that have been carried to court, believing that this method will be more interesting and instructive than any dissertations on abstract legal principles. Moreover, as a layman, I should not presume to attempt exposition.

My thanks are due to several colleagues for reading various sections of the manuscript and offering useful criticism and advice, namely, Mr. G. F. R. Anderson, Mr. E. Hulse (of the Middle Temple), Mr. J. C. M. Fairlie, Mr. F. Arnold Mansfield, and Mr. H. Stidworthy. In certain technical details assistance was given by Mr. A. Barnes and Mr. F. J. Ashley.

For permission to print illustrations I am grateful to Mr. W. Lints Smith, manager of *The Times*, Mr. W. A. McWhirter, editor-in-chief of the *Daily Mail*, Mr. E. T. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, and the editors of the *Morning Post*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Express*, the *News-Chronicle*, the *Daily Herald*, the *Birmingham Post*, the *Liverpool Post*, the *Yorkshire Post*, the *Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Western Mail*, the *New York Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. I am also indebted to the authors of a number of books, and to the editor of the *Journalist*, from which quotations are made. A list of books appears at the end.

*September, 1931.*

## PREFACE

### TO SECOND EDITION

ALTHOUGH new developments are constantly occurring in journalism there is little in the history of the past four years to affect that part of the craft dealt with in this book. Anything new in legislative or legal affairs having an effect on sub-editing is included in my book, "The Complete Journalist," published this year.

*June, 1935.*

## PREFACE

### TO THIRD EDITION

THE trend of journalism since the second edition was issued serves only to confirm the estimate in these pages of the growing importance of the sub-editor in the newspaper economy. During that period some of the distinguished journalists whom I quote have died (including C. P. Scott, Charles Hands, Edward Hulse, and George E. Beer), but I have not thought it necessary to alter the tenses in the passages referring to them.

*April, 1939.*

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# SUB-EDITING

## CHAPTER I

### ORIGINS AND DEFINITIONS

THE sub-editor has little "historical background." He has nothing like the respectable antiquity of the printer, stretching back half a millennium to the days of Gutenberg. He is not to be found in the dim and misty records of the first English news sheets of 300 years ago, the corantos that succeeded the news letters of earlier days and represented the growing effort to satisfy the public demand for records of national and foreign affairs. It would be extremely interesting to know if there was anything like sub-editorial work on the *Acta Diurna* of the Romans or the journal credited to Pekin in the sixth century. The *Acta* were published daily, being compiled by actuarii officers, possibly the forerunners of the modern sub-editor. Julius Cæsar is given the credit for originating this daily paper, and an effort of the imagination might picture the wielding of the Imperial blue pencil, which did not, however, eliminate the "human stories" of the Capital, for Juvenal has told us of a Roman lady passing her morning in reading the paper. It contained the births, marriages and deaths, and Court news.

The dictionaries scarcely deign to notice the sub-editor, and some of those that do so define



him informatively as "one who sub-edits." A natural exception to this treatment is the "Oxford Dictionary," which describes him as a subordinate editor. Webster's definition is "an assistant editor." This is misleading to-day, for the assistant editor is a person of pre-eminence in the modern office, eclipsing the sub-editor in the editorial hierarchy. To sub-edit, according to the "Oxford Dictionary," is to edit a paper or periodical, etc., under, and to prepare copy for, the supervision of a chief editor, a definition that gets somewhere near the mark. Literally an editor is one who brings forth, produces, provides, and a sub-editor is one who shares in a subordinate capacity in these functions.

Even the term "editor" was unknown in Stuart days and for long after. The writer of a newsbook was known as an "author," and a periodical writer as a "publisher." Journalists in the seventeenth century were pleasantly described by Chief Justice Scroggs as "scribblers who write to eat." If "editor" is a comparatively modern term, "sub-editor" is still more so, for this sub-division of editorial labour could only have occurred with the growth and organization of newspapers into larger and more elaborate entities. With this development of staffs there came into being men who were not primarily writers themselves, but whose function it was to control and revise the writings of others. Here was the germ of the distinct and specialized sub-editorial departments of to-day.





Fairly early last century we find occasional references in literature to the person and work of the sub-editor. Thackeray in "Philip" makes some one say, "I can tell you there is a great art in sub-editing a paper," and in "Pendennis" one of his characters is Jack Finucane, the sub-editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the incongruity of whose avocation amused Pen. Paste and scissors were his tools. Thackeray got to know something of the newspaper business, for he was editor of the *Cornhill* and a regular contributor to *The Times*. In 1837, Carlyle in "The French Revolution," with a characteristic touch, pictures Tallien "working sedentary at the sub-editorial desk." In these allusions we are back nearly 100 years, and apparently specific mention of the sub-editor by that title goes no earlier. In 1645 we read of a "sub-author." In an issue of the *Athenaeum* in 1905, a reference marks the strides made by the sub-editorial branch of journalism—"the dry data were set out skilfully enough in sub-editorial fashion."

### *A Modern Creation*

The fact is that the sub-editor, in the full sense of the word, is a modern creation, a product of the new, and ever newer, journalism. In the pioneering days of news, when home and foreign intelligence was circulated in the handwriting of letter scribes, there was no sub-editing. In "The Staple of News" (1626), Ben Jonson's fanciful play, the workaday staff of the news office were termed clerks, and the

chief was "master of the Staple and prime jeerer"; there were no sub-editors. Nearly forty years later we find Henry Muddiman authorized by the Council of State to write a weekly newsbook, and he became editor of the *Oxford Gazette*, the immediate predecessor of the *London Gazette*, familiar to the sub-editors of to-day. These writers of news letters—the Muddimans, the Bournes, the Butters, and the Dawkses—may be said to have been their own reporters, sub-editors, printers, and publishers.

When the newspapers, as distinct from books and letters, made their appearance under the names of postboys, mercuries, gazettes, diurnals, and courants, they were largely one-man productions, and of staffs in the later sense of the word there were none. It was only as newspapers grew in size and influence, as the shackles of censorship and taxation were removed, and the materials and machinery of production became cheaper, more ample and more efficient, that staffs began to develop. As the system of reporting public events was introduced and as correspondence grew, the sub-editor made his appearance. Mr. Haslam Mills, in his centenary history of the *Manchester Guardian*, speaks of Peterloo as the *début* of the reporter in public life. That memorable occasion was the Reform demonstration on the site of the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, on Whit Monday, 1819, when a huge crowd was charged by yeomanry and many were killed and wounded. The reporter was one Tyas, who was sent by *The Times*,





and in the *mêlée* he was arrested and thrown into prison. The *Leeds Mercury*, however, also had a reporter there, appropriately a Baines.

The formal *début* of the sub-editor I cannot discover. Perhaps there was none. The work was doubtless performed, in the first stages, by the reporter or by the editor or proprietor of the paper which developed its news services to such an extent that some expert supervision became necessary at the centre. The editor of a growing paper would become more and more absorbed with the direction of policy, and with the writing of his leading articles; the reporter or reporters would be fully occupied with the collection and writing of their news matter; and the inflow of news and letters of all kinds from outside correspondents would grow with all this development. In such days it is easy to realize how attention would perforce be directed to the preparation of this mass of copy for print. At first the work of sub-editing was doubtless done as a part-time job by some versatile journalist capable of turning his hand to anything in the office, and it would be some time before a whole-time sub-editor appeared.

To trace the emergence of the sub-editor is to study the whole process of the evolution of the newspaper. Most journalists have noted the appearance of newspapers of half a century ago, and the contrast with those of to-day is an easy mental picture. The solid pages of shorthand transcripts of public proceedings, largely Parliamentary and political, and long foreign dispatches in the important dailies, given under the most



formal and modest of "label" headings, cause a smile now when so much art and effort are lavished on display. But those early days are priceless because in them was founded that tradition of independence and impartiality which won world-wide fame for the British Press. The early years may have been stodgy; they were not sterile. Their methods have been superseded, but the principles then dominant are of permanent worth.

Three reproductions of historic interest are given. The *Daily Universal Register* (Plate I) was started by John Walter on 1st January, 1785, and three years later it became *The Times*. The words "printed logographically" appear under the title of the *Register* on the left. This refers to a system of printing with logotypes, which were type units of words instead of the usual single letters. The system was patented, but was not a success. Jeremiah Garnett, whose name is printed under the title of the first issue of the *Manchester Guardian* (Plate III), was its first printer, business manager and reporter, and its editor from 1848 to 1861.

Like everything else in a changing world the Press has changed. Popular education has altered the whole landscape; the progress of science has sown romantic stories in myriad fields. To-day the outlook of an editor is wider, more intense, more vital, more personal than it was a century ago, but moral standards remain—on record where they are not obeyed in practice.

An American editor (Mr. A. L. Miller, of Michigan), in an address delivered at the Tenth





Journalism Week in the University of Missouri, spoke well and clearly on this matter—

In this changing world, with its changed demands for news topics, news features, entertainment features, and the treatment of news—its new standards and its new interest—certain fundamentals do not change. Truth, decency, righteousness, a man's duty to government and society as proportioned to his influence—these things do not change. And these things shall, if we are worthy of our calling, guide us as we go about our function as reporters and interpreters of this wonderland of a modern world.

The rise of the great modern newspaper has produced, possibly as the most characteristic creation in its domestic economy, the skilled sub-editor. The latest fashions in news treatment, display, and make-up, require highly-trained and specialized sub-editors. When the question is asked "What is a sub-editor?" the answer is that he is the man who puts the news story into its acceptable form and its wonderful setting; converts the mass of undigested and ill-assorted matter into a connected, readable, and fascinating story by his constructive ability and the use of the many methods of display which he has at his command. In an age when a long and brilliantly written dispatch from a distinguished war correspondent was published in small type, and one fount throughout, under the uninspiring heading "Foreign Intelligence," with paragraphs half a column long and no cross heads to break up the mass of type, the function of the sub-editor was doubtless less complicated; to-day such a piece of news would be heralded and trumpeted by big and clamant headlines, enforced with introduction and indentations, its strongest passages thrown up in

black type, and parts of its text cunningly steered around inset pictures. The craftsman who constructs and devises all this is the sub-editor, and his task is onerous. There is still the same need for careful checking of fact and name and quotation, for competent and erudite supervision, but added to these, which were the glory of a former generation, there are the demands of the new art of display. The process of sub-editing may be likened to what in biology is known as metabolism. Constructive metabolism is the process, in an organism or a single cell, by which nutritive material is built up into living matter; destructive metabolism is the process by which protoplasm is broken down into simpler substances. The parallel is close and suggestive.

### *The "New Journalism"*

With the advent of the "New Journalism" the development of the sub-editorial specialist became more and more rapid. The germ of the modern paper has been traced to *Tit Bits*. That may seem at first sight a crude theory, but there is an element of truth in it. George Newnes, who was not himself a journalist in the strict sense, and W. T. Stead, one of the most brilliant journalists in history, were thrown into association at that time. Newnes declared that his policy was to give the people what interested them and not what *should* interest them. He recognized that a generation was coming which, under the stimulus of the Education Act of 1870, would demand information and entertainment, and so he set himself to provide the popular

reading required. Stead bent his energies to the wider journalism of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, where he rode the whirlwind and directed the storm. These two men provided the creative impulse of the New Journalism. [Henry Lucy claimed that the founder of the New Journalism was Frederick Greenwood, who planned the old "P.M.G.," and "cut things short." Therein he exercised a true sub-editorial prerogative.] Ten years later Alfred Harmsworth began to write for magazines devoted to the young life of his day. Later he saw that Newnes had reached an immense new public, and Alfred Harmsworth's initial share in exploiting this great opportunity was *Answers*. From this sprang those great achievements in modern journalism which include the *Daily Mail*, the *Evening News*, and the *Daily Mirror*. It is not my purpose to trace in detail the momentous changes in the newspaper world which these beginnings heralded, but simply to indicate that here we find the revolution which has called into being the sub-editor as we know him to-day. Lord Northcliffe once said to a new contributor to his magazines: "I have always given the public, not what I thought they ought to like, but what I know they will like and always have liked, though in a form they imagined to be new. Not that I would ever pander to low tastes. On the contrary, I encourage good, but popular, ones." (Mrs. C. N. Williamson's "Inky Way.")

Northcliffe owed much to the talented lieutenants whom he gathered round him, but he

was the guiding star of the advance, and his views on the principles and practice of the New Journalism are of profound interest and importance. Speaking in 1920, he said ("Northcliffe," by Hamilton Fyfe)—

You could search the Victorian newspapers in vain for any reference to changing fashions, for instance. You could not find in them anything that would help you to understand the personalities of public men. We cannot get from them a clear and complete picture of the times in which they were published, as one could from the *Daily Mail*. Before that was published journalism dealt with only a few aspects of life. What we did was to extend its purview to life as a whole. This was difficult. It involved the training of a new type of journalist. The old type was convinced that anything which would be a subject of conversation ought to be kept out of the papers.

Did you know there was a sub-editor on *The Times* who once spiked an elephant? Yes, an elephant escaped from a circus in South London and went careering about the streets. When this sub-editor received an account of the incident, he stuck it on the waste-file with other rejected copy. It was too interesting!

Most journalists of that time had that kind of mentality, though perhaps not quite so pronounced. Or else they thought that the way to sell a newspaper was to have first-class criticisms of books and pictures and music and plays. The only thing that will sell a newspaper in large numbers is news, and news is anything out of the ordinary. You know, of course, the great American editor's definition? Dana said, "If a dog bites a man, that's nothing, but if a man bites a dog, that's news." In the *Daily Mail* we paid little or no attention to the dogs which bit men—and the dogs didn't like it—I mean the politicians, the bigwigs, the people who laid foundation stones and presided at banquets and opened Church bazaars. On the other hand, we gave the men who bit dogs such prominence as they never had before, and we were accused of lowering the dignity of journalism!

### "Pivot of the Paper"

In "Conditions of Work and Life of Journalists," issued by the International Labour Office, there is an excellent general survey of Press organization to-day. Having observed that

after the editor comes the sub-editor, the writer quotes a description of the latter by G. Renard in "Les travailleurs du livre et du journal." This is so faithful a picture of the conditions in the generality of offices that I append it—

The sub-editor is the pivot of the paper. It is he who receives and reads the articles and often orders them. In any case, it is he who deals with their publication, who requires, if need be, corrections and cuts to be made, who with the help of the makers-up, settles the order and the place in which the articles will appear, the type in which they will be set, the headlines and the illustrations which will accompany the text. He is obliged to remain until the moment at which the stop-press news arrives. If the newspaper appears in the morning, he is at work until 2 a.m. and he goes home as best he can. If the paper appears in the evening, he works until 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and he lunches when he finds time. His very fatiguing work is well enough paid, but he dies or retires fairly young. He is in touch with the reporters, who fear him, and with the printers, who carry out his orders. He is thus the liaison officer between the intellectual and the manual workers of the paper.

Those who have knowledge of the various types of office in this country will see that the above does not apply in the whole of its details to all. It is interesting to compare it with a description of the copy readers (sub-editors) of America, given by Dr. Lyle Spencer in his book, "News Writing." The scene is the office of a metropolitan afternoon journal—

When a reporter appears on his first morning, he will find a big, desk-crowded room, deserted except for two or three silent workers reading and clipping papers at a long table. These men are known variously as the gas-house gang, the lobster shift, the morning stars, etc. They are the reporters and copy readers who read the morning papers for stories that may be re-written or followed up for publication during the day. They have been on duty since two or three in the morning and have prepared most of the material for the bull dog edition, the morning issue printed sometime between 7 and 10 a.m., and mainly re-written from the morning papers. On the



entrance of the new reporter they will look up, direct him to a chair where he may sit until the city editor (news editor) comes, and pay no more attention to him. They, or others who take their places, edit all the news stories. They correct spelling and punctuation, re-write a story when the reporter has missed the main feature, reconstruct the lead, cut out the contradictions, duplications and libellous statements, and in general make the article conform to the length and style demanded by the paper; and having carefully revised the story, they write the headlines and chute it to the composing room.

On the whole, these men are the most unpopular on the force, since they are subject to double criticism, from the editors above them and the reporters whose copy they correct. The city editor and the managing editor hold them responsible for poor headlines, libellous statements, involved sentences, and errors generally; the reporters blame them for pruning down their stories, changing leads, and often destroying what they regard as the very point of what they had to say.

### *The Team Spirit*

After this little transatlantic peep, let me return to this country. In the provinces the journalist is often called upon to act in the composite capacity of reporter-sub-editor, more particularly on the smaller weekly Press, which is unable to employ a whole-time sub-editor. My reporter friends may smile at my seeming apotheosis of the sub-editor, but this is a book on sub-editing. A study of the reporter would probably reveal a corresponding appreciation of the special and characteristic functions of that branch of journalism. An experienced journalist can in all likelihood do satisfactory work in either sphere, and sometimes on small papers he will add to this leader and note writing. The best sub-editor, as a rule, is one who has graduated in the arduous school of reporting. With the team spirit that pervades a newspaper staff, there should be no justification for

the gibe that the sub-editor is the natural enemy of the reporter, and is bent on the destruction of his best efforts. A piece of good copy will always bring joy to the heart of the true sub-editor. It is sometimes urged that sub-editorial work becomes mechanical, and that the work of the reporter is more creative. The truth is that there is scope for creative work in both callings. The sub-editor not only puts the finishing touches to the stories he handles, but he often supplies essential ideas, purpose, and *motif* otherwise lacking. Hence, the complaint often heard that the reporter does not recognize in the printed product the story of his creation. Sometimes it is fortunate that he cannot. On the other hand some reporters have been heard to express gratitude to the sub-editor who saved them from blunders and made their stories more valuable. Sub-editing is not the mere manipulation of other people's brains. At its best it is constructive and creative itself. While he has to spend much of his time in revision and correction, the sub-editor often has to reconstruct the matter that comes to him, to give a story a new angle, to infuse life and interest into it, and to supply missing fact and feature which make the dry bones live.

To come back to definition, the sub-editor is one of the most important "executives" on the staff, because he carries the delegated authority of the editor in deciding the form and content of the paper. In these days of amalgamation and syndication, when a whole chain of papers is modelled on a standard pattern, the sub-editorial

work demanded is of increasing importance. It is not infrequently true that the paper is literally "made" by the sub-editors. In spite of the curtailment of the area of journalistic employment by amalgamations and incorporations—which often, alas, spell suppression—there is still a demand for competent sub-editors. Many papers, even some of the most important, tend increasingly to rely on the Press agencies for their routine reports, and leave it to their sub-editors to cast them in the special mould they require.

The work has its penalties. It is performed in most offices in a drab room, and those who toil at night are cut off from the currents of outside life—from the theatre, from civic engagements, from social pleasures, and even from the mild dissipation of the wireless at home. If the nights are spent in strenuous work at the desk, the daylight hours are largely swallowed up in "reading the paper," and seeking other sources of information to keep the mind abreast of thought and action. The foreign sub-editor has a limitless field of study to fit him for his work.

A life of isolation and intensive labour, redeemed only by the occasional morning game of golf or lawn tennis, or an hour of gardening, to brace the body and the brain for the nightly strain: a calling full of romance and zest to the born journalist, yet singularly dull and uninspiring to the outside observer. When visitors are shown around the big office it is not the plain rooms which house the "brains department" which excite interest, but the linotype

and autoplate, the giant press. The copy carrier is more studied and admired than the copy creator. There is nothing spectacular about a sub-editor. The desks at which the troglodytes with horn-rimmed spectacles are bent amid a mass of manuscripts and stacks of reference books, claim polite attention but no real interest, but they are nevertheless the birthplace of the ideas and conceptions which the mechanical departments exist to serve and execute.

## CHAPTER II

### *QUALIFICATIONS*

To tabulate the qualities essential to the ideal sub-editor is to present an imposing, not to say a forbidding, catalogue. It is a revelation to sit down and, from one's knowledge and experience of a host of good craftsmen, to set out in a formal list all the gifts which make for success. If I were challenged as to whether I had ever met one man who combined all these qualities in one supreme sub-editorial personality I should have to confess that I had not. Such a man would indeed be an Admirable Crichton. It would be a counsel of perfection to postulate the possession of all these elements of character and training, even in embryo, as an indispensable condition of success. The whole may not, indeed does not, reside in the individual, but in a group they will all be found in the common stock, and a great paper is the product of many brains; so that if the collocation be not found in the unit, either by natural endowment or by acquirement, there is no need to despair.

Here, then, is my analysis of the equipment of the complete sub-editor—

Sympathy	}	The "human" personality.
Insight		
Breadth of view		
Imagination		
Sense of humour		

Orderly and well-balanced mind, which implies level judgment, sense of perspective and proportion.

Cool head ; ability to work in an atmosphere of hurry and excitement without getting flurried or incapable of accurate work.

Quickness of thought coupled with accuracy.

Conscientiousness, keenness and ruthlessness, rightly directed.

The judicial faculty, i.e. well-informed common sense.

Capacity for absorbing fact—and fancy—and imparting them in an acceptable manner.

Adaptability—the power, whatever be one's prepossessions, of getting the reader-angle.

Sound general education and wide general knowledge.

In particular, a thorough grasp of questions and persons of the day—political, industrial, etc.—and close acquaintance with contemporary journalism and literature.

Knowledge of the main principles of the law of libel, contempt and copyright.

Ability to write in good English, and hence to ensure that the stories handled are converted into that currency.

Physical fitness for a trying, sedentary life, which takes its toll of nerves, sight, and digestion.

The team spirit—a newspaper is one of the most striking products of co-operative enterprise and effort.

I have, for the sake of emphasis, purposely omitted from the above list a supreme qualification. Without it the journalist will find himself in the case of the rich young man in the parable, who was told "One thing thou lackest," and that the vital thing. In order to give sharper stress to it I name it separately. It is—

## A PENETRATING SENSE OF NEWS VALUES

At the risk of repetition I will say that the lack of some of the qualities enumerated may not bar a man from becoming a useful sub-editor ; in fact the possession of some of them to an exceptional degree, with the absence of others, may lead to definite success. With a

discriminating distribution of work in the sub-editorial room, a pooling of brain and capacity is secured, and the resources of a varied team are utilized to the greatest advantage. The absence from a staff of any who, like Mrs. Hardcastle's son Tony, are "the very pink of perfection," does not mean that the same result cannot be achieved in combination.

One other useful addition to the armoury I will mention, and that is the cultivation of a special subject. If you make yourself really proficient and expert in some subject it is surprising how often it will stand you in good stead. A few useful specializations can be named, such as: local government; national and local finance; meteorology; antiquities (Roman Britain, etc.); heraldry; the peerage and social precedence; agriculture; aviation; astronomy. These are some that, in my personal observation, have assisted men to "make good."

The "human" qualities specified are specially important on papers which depend entirely on popular appeal. In a homily to his staff a well-known editor once said: "A good reporter can be discouraged beyond repair by the indifferent or perfunctory sub-editor whose deletion of human touches reduces a story to junk." It all depends on the class and character of the paper and the extent of the adaptability of the sub-editor. While some papers are for ever searching for the "human" story, the "sob stuff" which they rate so highly is treated with disdain by the more dignified, restrained and traditional Press, which has a different journalistic code,

and definitely caters for a public that is not open to constant sensational appeal.

A careful study of the various types of papers; observation of their methods; comparison and contrast of the different systems of news treatment, use of type, and what may be compendiously described as "schools" of sub-editorial practice, are of the utmost value to the aspiring young journalist. In these days innovations are ever being tried, and yet one notices, as a refreshing change, a return sometimes to older methods. Those who aim at work on a big paper must study styles and analyse methods. There can be no question that on the whole the tendency in British journalism is more and more to exalt the "human" story, and therefore the sub-editors who have the faculty of discerning, appreciating, and rendering in the most vivid and appealing form, this class of news will be the most likely to succeed. The coveted "human" touch is not a common possession; it is sufficiently rare to give those who are fortunate enough to possess it a sure path to advancement.

### *Not a "Writing Man"*

First-class writing ability is not necessarily demanded. In the smaller offices of the country the sub-editor, if he exists as such, often has charge of a column of local notes or gossip, given under such headings as "By the Way," "Notes of the Week," "Local Topics," "What we Hear," "It is said that," "Wanted to Know," or some other catchy title to cover the miscellanea of



the district. Similar in essence are the well-known "Talk of the Day" in the *Evening News* and the "Londoner's Diary" in the *Evening Standard*, which are composite productions. The celebrated "columnists" of America, whose value is their high individual merit, have an increasing counterpart in this country. The local papers to which I have referred, expect also leaders or leader notes from any member of the staff who shows leaning or capacity in that direction.

In the larger offices, where work is more strictly defined, the sub-editor is not regarded as a "writing man." He must, of course, be able to write introductions to news stories, and summaries of unwieldy documents that contain points that are worth giving. There is in some offices a sub-editor who is specifically known as the "re-write" man, who has to reconstruct, in the style of the paper, stories that come from various sources. But for the work of a sub-editor in the ordinary way on a big paper the chief need is a clear, terse, unadorned style of writing—the terser the better—for the presentation of fact and news. The "writing men," properly so called, are, of course, the leader writers, the contributors of special articles, and the descriptive reporters.

Though not primarily a writer, the sub-editor must be a good judge of style in others and a keen critic of grammar and taste. He may be merely a poetaster or a literary philanderer, but he is able to recognize good literature when he sees it, although the faculty of great writing is

not his. One may revel in Shakespeare, enjoy Tennyson, and admire Bridges, and understand the subtle differences in style and workmanship which mark their respective geniuses, without being capable of such exalted work, and this type of critical power is a sub-editorial requisite. Fine writing has to be directed to its proper channel, and its real objective in the scheme of the paper. The opening of a local hospital by some county dignitary demands "newsy" handling and not ornate writing, and the correspondent who essays the latter must be reduced to correct form. On the contrary, the record of a great national ceremonial calls for adequate literary effort, and the sub-editor not only gives the writer full scope but backs him up with his best display.

### *Education: A Half-Truth*

There is a growing recognition of the value of specialized education for journalism in the chief countries of the world, in spite of the familiar old argument that journalists are born and not made, and that the only real training ground is the newspaper office and work itself. The persistence of this objection is due to the fact that it is a half-truth. The catalogue of qualifications given at the beginning of this chapter indicates clearly that some of the most important gifts for success in journalism are those of natural endowment, and this is not disputed by the most ardent advocates of vocational training; but the argument that natural talent, aptitude and genius require, and profit

by, technical training, with a proper cultural background or basis, appears to me unanswerable. I would contend that the education of a journalist should be the best attainable in the general sense and the most efficient in the technical sense. The United States of America leads the way with its schools of journalism which are associated with a great number of the universities, colleges, and high schools in that country. But to imagine that the university graduate, as such, is qualified for journalism, still less for sub-editing in particular, is a grave error. I have seen many a man come straight to the sub-editor's room from his university and, after a brief struggle with work which demanded qualities and training he did not possess, fade away, a transient and embarrassed phantom. I have seen others who also came direct from the classic seats of learning to this work and, because they had the instinct and *flair* for it, they succeeded—and did so more quickly and more emphatically because of the educational “pull” they had at the start. The latter were men of quick adaptability and ready mind, adept, as journalists should be, in mastering new subjects, and brilliant exceptions to the rule that sub-editorial work demands long training in the smaller office or the vocational class or preferably both.

The late W. L. Courtney, in “The Passing Hour,” wrote—

In journalism no one has time to teach any one else—the only way to learn journalism is to practise it; but if you are under such a master as Sir Edward [Lawson, of the *Daily Telegraph*] you are all the time insensibly taking it in through eyes and

ears, unconsciously, or almost unconsciously, assimilating the principles, learning what to avoid, what to utilize—besides attaining to a certain attitude or standard from which to estimate the value of the materials before you. . . He [my chief] realized that coming as I did from Oxford, I should be only too likely to be something of a pedant. But he was very kind to my priggishness, though now and then he would slyly smile.

All this points a moral. Training is necessary for the average candidate. For the ordinary young person, with no special equipment or initial advantage, there is a poor prospect of learning the job in the rush and tumble of a big office. In these “crowded hours of glorious life” the actors in the daily drama have no time to give elementary instruction to raw beginners, whose jumping-off ground should be the provincial newspaper, which gives the very best training for the larger sphere of Fleet Street.

## *Training in Provinces*

Many years of personal experience in the provinces, both on weekly and daily papers, compel me to impress upon the beginner the advantage of “serving his time” in the country. There are the great provincial dailies, with familiar and honoured names, known all over the country; the important county weeklies and the smaller papers of the city and the urban district, many of which maintain a high standard of policy and production. It was a theory of Gladstone’s that the provincial Press was better informed and a truer reflex of the public opinion of the country than the London Press, but this was somewhat discounted by the shrewd observation of an American commentator

that the cause of the statesman's preference was the fact that he was criticized by the more independent national organs of London and flattered by the newspapers of the provinces.

The greatest enterprise in the collection of news is shown by the provincial papers. Those established in the Midlands, the North, and the West have an advantage in time in the early hours of the morning over their London rivals which they use to the full in getting late news "scoops." The extra hour or two open to the paper which can go to press later than the London dailies, with their handicap of transport, sometimes mean the receipt of late important news, which is rushed into the last editions while the London papers are already printed and on the rail for their distant destinations. These chances of news "beats" are eagerly exploited by the late sub-editors of Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Plymouth, Bristol, Cardiff, and other big provincial centres. An opportunity of beating Fleet Street is not to be missed. The true craftsman always takes pride in his work, and thus the journalist finds a never-failing fascination in seeing the product of his brain and enterprise in the printed page. This stands largely true to-day, although the economic outlook of journalism is changing, and the personal and independent proprietorships of the "good old days" are fast succumbing to chains and groups dominated by corporations of financiers. These companies do not, like the old type of proprietor, regard journalism as a craft; to them it is an investment for

dividend purposes, and they "have no body to be kicked or soul to be damned." Still the old pride of the journalist clings to life, and at any rate the new *régime* has brought an improvement of salaries.

Work in the provinces gives a thorough drilling in all-round journalism, and it is from this source that the *personnel* of Fleet Street is largely recruited. The best men in the London rank and file have come from the country. Having gone through the mill there and been really grounded in the elements of the craft, they have a sure foundation on which to build a career. To have plodded through early years of strenuous toil in the country, learned all about Local Government and industries; to have mastered the whole technique of reporting in its manifold and devious forms, is a lifelong advantage, and when the sub-editorial desk is reached the knowledge accumulated, and the comprehension of the reporter's job in getting the story and transmitting it, are of the greatest value. If there is a royal road, this is it.

### *University Men*

A sub-editor leaping from the university to the copy desk, competent for the work, is a phenomenon. The vast majority of those who are producing the great newspapers of to-day have been trained in the school of practical experience. Doubtless some famous editors, brilliant correspondents and leader writers have arrived in the newspaper arena in a sudden and startling manner, but the sub-editorial desk is

not often the landing place of the prodigies. Sir William Beach Thomas, in the opening paragraph of his book "A Traveller in News," says—

The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are not good schools of journalism, it is said. One of the most modern of newspaper proprietors compounded a list of editors, in which only one Oxford or Cambridge name appeared. Mr. Geoffrey Dawson, a Fellow of All Souls, one of Lord Milner's famous "Kindergarten" in South Africa, saved the universities' bacon by editing *The Times* under successive proprietors. But a list of those journalists who used to be called "Specials" would give a very different tally. It is probable that school and university life breeds a native distaste for the work of editing in an office, while it prompts to a life of stir and travel.

It would be a tempting inquiry to look into the biographies of great journalists to test these theories, but a few instances must suffice. John Thadeus Delane, who became editor of *The Times* at the age of 23, had left Oxford only a year when he took control and settled down to a practical routine at Printing House Square. He exercised the most vigilant supervision over the work of his staff, and is said to have read the complete paper, either in galley or page proof, before he left the office every morning. Other Oxford men spring readily to mind, three of them associated with that stalwart organ the *Manchester Guardian*. Mr. C. P. Scott, who joined it in 1871 and was editor until recently, when he retired and was given the freedom of Manchester, was privately educated, but, though of Nonconformist stock, he obtained admission to Corpus Christi, Oxford, and left with a first in "Greats." He obtained two of his most talented subordinates from the same source. William Thomas Arnold became chief leader

writer. He was a specialist in Roman provincial administration, but became, as Mr. Haslam Mills says ("The Manchester Guardian," a century history, 1921), "a practical, serviceable journalist of the small hours . . . the journalist spoiled the historian, but the historian perfected the journalist." Then there was C. E. Montague, one of the chief spokesmen of the *Guardian*, a charming writer on politics and plays, whom Mr. Scott haled from Oxford. To leave Manchester, Mr. J. A. Spender, an Oxford man, became editor at 24 of the *Eastern Morning News*, Hull, and in London for many years his leaders in the old green *Westminster Gazette* (now, alas, no more) held great sway in the political world. All these were university men, great journalists, but not sub-editors.

W. T. Stead was editor at 22, but was not a university man. He received his only formal education at a Nonconformist school in Wakefield, ending at the age of 14. If ever there was a born journalist, he was one. Of a different school, George Augustus Sala was equally eminent. Northcliffe left school and faced life at 15, but told Hamilton Fyfe, who has written an intimate study of him, that he often regretted that he had renounced what would have been of immense value to him, namely, a university education.

He believed fervently in the exaggerated value of a university education to young men entering journalism. I once put it to him that nearly all the most famous journalists of his time had succeeded without having had this advantage. I cited Greenwood, Stead, Garvin, Wickham Steed, Massingham, A. G. Gardiner. "Yes, yes," he cried, "but they were men bound to make their way to the front. I am not thinking



about geniuses—they can take care of themselves. But think of the social value of having been at a university. It is like being able to ride. Every young man who wants to get on ought to be able to ride—and to talk French."

Northcliffe once confided to Tom Clarke: "I have suffered from one disability throughout my career; you would never guess it. I suffer from the fact that I was not at Oxford. You have a son? Send him to a good public school and then to Oxford. But not for three years. That is too much. One year is quite enough. It is a great asset. It means such a lot to a man. It gives him in his impressionable years that foundation of poise among his fellow creatures which can be got nowhere else." Commenting on this, Mr. A. P. Nicholson says that, although Northcliffe may have pretended to hanker after an Oxford experience, he would have rebelled against its influence, for his was the culture of life and experience.

Lord Beaverbrook published an article some years ago on journalism as a career, and in it he discussed the value of academic training. He gave a list of London editors, with details of their education, and declared that the inevitable conclusion to be drawn was "that a public school and university course is no advantage to the journalist who aspires to be an editor, and may possibly be an actual hindrance . . . The youth who aspires to journalism should begin at the very bottom rung of the ladder, and, starting as a reporter, should go through the whole weary round of sub-editing before he can hope to be a news-editor. For not only will he learn in this way the whole technique of

his profession, but he will be in constant touch with the actual raw material of his trade—the news.”

### *Memory a Great Asset*

I am diverging from my theme—the vital necessity of education to a sub-editor. C. E. Montague hit the mark when he said: “The one thing that disables almost all young journalists is that their general education has not been liberal and has stopped in the middle.” I would advise wide and systematic reading, all directed to equipment for the sub-editor’s tasks. Undoubtedly one of the greatest assets is a retentive memory. To be able to recall events, and associations arising out of the news of the moment, is very serviceable. What did an eminent man say on a given subject, not in 1863, but a year or two ago?—in what speech did a certain important passage occur?—is so-and-so alive or dead?—what was the last “previous disaster”?—these and many similar questions arise in the night’s work, and the memory which can give the clue to the answer is invaluable. The careful reading of one’s own paper is absolutely necessary. The sub-editor, of all men on the staff, must be thoroughly well primed in current news and especially in the contents of the paper he serves. When he goes to his desk he should have a close knowledge of what was in the issue for that day. It follows that those engaged in general sub-editing should be among the best read men in the field of news. The chief sub-editor has to concentrate on this.

His test comes sometimes at the editorial conference when a searching question is put from the chair at a moment's notice as to the why, when, and how of things on the schedule of the day's news, and what, if anything, has already been given on a certain subject.

The sad fact has to be admitted that in some offices the work of the sub-editors is inadequately realized. The leading men, who make the appointments, have sometimes themselves had no practical experience of sub-editing and do not appreciate the arduousness, difficulty, and extreme responsibility of the work. Many reporters declare emphatically that they would never submit themselves to the tyranny of the sub-editor's post. Yet this section of the editorial staff is of the first importance. It is no exaggeration to say that a newspaper is made or marred in the sub-editor's room. We see complaints in the technical Press of the dearth of good sub-editors. Writing in 1926, Mr. Walter Morley, chief sub-editor of the *Manchester Evening News*, said: "'Good sub-editors are so hard to get,' sighed an editor within my hearing the other day. They are. The real first-rate man is almost as rare as sunshine in Manchester. He is in demand in every newspaper office. He can command a good salary and splendid conditions, and his work is as important and interesting as any in the profession of journalism, offering opportunities for initiative and brilliance." Yet he notes a growing reluctance on the part of the younger men to sit at the sub-editor's desk, because they hear "grisly stories of the boredom

and drudgery of it all." "I agree," adds Mr. Morley, "that the 'good' reporter does not necessarily make a 'good' sub-editor, for the qualities demanded are different; but there can be no doubt that many a man who is regarded as a reporter of no special mark would succeed brilliantly as a sub-editor." A deputy chief sub-editor, commenting on Mr. Morley's article, argued that one of the reasons for the rarity of good sub-editors was the lack of appreciation of their work in high quarters. "It is not to be wondered at," he said, "that a good reporter who would make a good sub-editor would think twice before forsaking the comparatively indolent life in the reporter's room for the rush and responsibility of the sub's room at the same salary." Not long ago I heard it stated (possibly with a tinge of exaggeration) that a famous newspaper was produced with an "effective" sub-editorial staff of four out of a total of fourteen, meaning that the other ten were "passengers." The fact is that a man must love his work if he is to succeed. Perfunctory work simply will not do in these exacting days; a live paper has no room for men who are not keen and enthusiastic. The instance just quoted shows the shortage of smart sub-editors.

For a reporter to become a sub-editor is undoubtedly promotion. This view is much more emphatic than that expressed by that great provincial journalist, Lord Russell of Liverpool. He was consulted by Mr. J. Hall Richardson, of the *Daily Telegraph*, then a beginner, and wrote: "As to the rival claims of reporting and

sub-editing I scarcely like to advise you, but I suppose the latter is considered promotion. At the same time, were I you I should like a little of the other experience first, especially if you can get into the Gallery."

Quite a sound piece of advice. Mr. Richardson, speaking from his long experience, says ("From the City to Fleet Street")—

Sub-editors in those days had certainly not come into their own. They were little more than correctors of the Press, condensing, and seldom re-writing; they certainly did not originate. Remember they had no telephone with which to call up a string of sources of information from which they could compile a first-hand account. They have advanced to pre-eminence in the economy of a newspaper office, and the outside men are nowadays mere slaves to their commands: they can cut, recast, remodel, elaborate, or what is worse than all, cancel and leave out altogether the results of the painful labours of a reporter or descriptive writer, who dares not complain.

If, in fairness to Mr. Richardson, I quote him again on the subject, I hope I shall not be helping to aggravate the dearth of good sub-editors. In this book I indicate—sufficiently, I hope, to attract the minds and stimulate the ambitions of young journalists—the fascination and responsibility of the work and the not inconsiderable payment made for it. Here is the extract: "Taking everything into consideration, if you wish to see life—to enjoy journalism—shun sub-editing, go reporting or special corresponding and put as many miles between yourself and the office as possible."

### *An Admiring Tribute*

One of the most striking tributes to sub-editors as a class that I have come across is

contained in a delightful chapter, entitled "A Fool i' the Forest," contributed by Mr. Edward Shanks to "The Book of Fleet Street." He says—

The business of news-gathering perplexes me, and, as for the business of so presenting the news that has been gathered that the public may read it, I hardly like to let my mind dwell upon it at all. Of all created beings I think it is the sub-editor who most commands my timorous admiration. The news is thrown at him in huge miscellaneous masses, which, but for his labours, would kill the reader stone-dead with mental indigestion. He has to cook this mass, having first trimmed it into reasonable proportions, keeping one eye on the probable accuracy of the facts as stated, another on the law of libel, another on various other considerations which crop up from time to time, such as the law relating to elections, and yet a fourth, which must be no less vigilant than the other three, upon the clock. Sub-editors, when I meet them, seem to have only two eyes just like other people; where they keep the other two I cannot say, but I know they must have them.

In addition to the multi-ocular power with which they are thus credited, sub-editors who succeed have what some one has vaguely called "an extraordinary instinct for arriving at results." It must surely be the "sixth-sense" to which Julian Ralph refers in his book "The Making of a Journalist"—

This sixth sense of the journalist is by no means akin to the news sense. A newspaper man must have the news sense in order to distinguish what is worth publishing, and to know what proportions to give to the various incidents which make up a newspaper, if he be an editor, or which constitute the story he is writing, if he be a reporter. He can get along very well without the sixth sense, which is a most mysterious quality or instinct, and which many possess; but no man can command or rely upon. It seizes a man with irresistible force and leads him to what he seeks. Sometimes it even takes him to the seat of news which he is not seeking, and of the existence of which he has had no inkling. It frequently impels him to act against his judgment and to do things which he feels to be absurd, and yet is obliged to persist in until the reward comes with a shock like lightning from a cloudless sky.

Ralph gives instances of the operation of this instinct from his own busy life as a special reporter. They might be paralleled by equally veracious cases in the life of a sub-editor—physically sedentary, but mentally the most active.

Many books about journalism are too much concerned with the taverns of Fleet Street and its environs to give a true picture of modern conditions. The old Bohemianism has largely disappeared, much to the regret of many artistic and congenial souls, but journalism, like every other calling, is falling into line with the canons of up-to-date business efficiency. Fortunately the spirit of comradeship which animated the social circles of a past generation can, and does, survive, though in a less romantic setting, and it is all to the good that it is divorced from the drinking *obligato* that proved the undoing of so many lovable and brilliant fellows. Salaries and conditions have vastly improved, and the follies of improvidence are more widely realized. The new outlook is destructive of one of the most insidious foes to a successful career in journalism.

### *The Place of Women*

A word about women in journalism. I use the word "journalism" without reference to sex, because the test of practice reveals that good work is done in many branches of the profession by women equally with men. In the agreements which the National Union of Journalists has made with the proprietors'

organizations in London and the provinces there is no differentiation of sex as regards salary scales, hours, and conditions of work. A journalist is a journalist and the equality of opportunity is complete. Nevertheless the woman journalist is in many offices still a rarity. There are women who have done most of the work of a newspaper and done it extremely well—the “shorthand typist,” the assistant in the library, the editor’s secretary, the social contributor, the reporter, the special correspondent, the editor of the women’s page, and the dramatic critic. But the curious fact is that women sub-editors are still so rare. There may be a few in the provinces, but there are scarcely any in Fleet Street at the present time, so far as I am aware. Women have proved their qualifications for all the posts I have mentioned; why they have failed to invade the sub-editorial “den” is a question which lies outside the province of my discussion. Proved worth, ability and staying power are essential, and possibly it is too early for women to have graduated so far. There is no deliberate “ban” on women sub-editors, so far as I can learn, and the question of fair play or otherwise does not arise. If women demonstrated their fitness for this exacting work the opportunity would not be denied them, and the minor obstacles which suggest themselves to their introduction to a department, hitherto monopolized by men, would not prove insurmountable, but the tests imposed are severe.

I am reminded of a prophecy on this subject,



which has not yet been fulfilled. It was made many years ago when, under Northcliffe's inspiration, women like Lady Diana Cooper and Lady Clifton were engaged to write. Charles Hands, who in those days on the *Daily Mail* played many parts as reporter, special writer, and war correspondent, had a high opinion of their work and its value, and committed himself to this prediction, recorded in Tom Clarke's "Diary"—

In ten years, and maybe before, you will see a revolution . . . more women than ever in newspaper work, reporting, sub-editing, news editing, even editing. It's bound to come. All the advantages are with women. Firstly, they don't drink. Secondly, they are more in touch with the realities of life . . . They are better judges; they have more taste; they are more human. Look at their knowledge and experience of the home. Their outlook is really wider than that of men.

This may be true in some respects, but the ten years expired long ago, and the revolution has not yet come.

### *Views of Three Chiefs*

My judgment as to qualifications is confirmed by three men of great experience, each of whom has been chief sub-editor of a great popular daily. They have given me a statement of six essential qualifications which they always seek in their staffs, and as it is impossible to obtain higher authorities on this matter I give their views in full, with the proviso that in each case the outlook is that of an organ of the new popular type—

#### SIX ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR A SUB-EDITOR

##### I

I. ACCURACY, ACCURACY, AND AGAIN ACCURACY! This I put right in the forefront. The conscientious journalist has as great

a moral responsibility to the public he informs and educates as to his editor and proprietor. Therefore he must supply facts. Inaccuracies and misstatements are a blot on his escutcheon, and he should exercise the utmost care, by verification in books of reference and by recourse to other sources of information which will be ready to his hand, to ensure absolute accuracy.

2. A KEEN SENSE OF NEWS AND NEWS VALUES. He must be able to appraise almost at a glance the relative importance of any piece of news that comes before him. Not infrequently news that will shake the nation is flashed over the wires in half a dozen words. He must bring his experience and his imagination into play. At the outset of his career he will be spoon fed—that is to say, he will be directed by an experienced chief sub-editor, who will instruct him in regard to the space a piece of news should occupy and as to its method of treatment. As his own art and knowledge develop he will gain facility in forming judgments of his own. If he thinks that in the hurry and rush of work his chief has missed the significance of any item of news he should not hesitate to state his view and the reasons for it. Many a blunder has been averted by an alert junior sub-editor.

3. THE CULTIVATION OF THE FACULTY FOR SEEING AND SEIZING ON THE DOMINATING FACT IN AN ITEM OF NEWS. This should be brought to the top of the story—not left to the last paragraph. Take as an illustration a memorable meeting at the Carlton Club. The all-important event—the ballot—came at the close of the meeting. Its outcome brought about the fall of a government. This was the dominating fact, and in all well sub-edited accounts of the meeting the result of the ballot was disclosed in the opening paragraph. This was the news peg on which all the rest depended.

4. THE ABILITY TO WRITE HEADINGS WHICH TELL THE READER AT A GLANCE WHAT HAS HAPPENED. Heading writing is a gift for which some sub-editors have a genius and others have not. Headings should convey the news in a nutshell. They should focus the predominant features of the article over which they stand. The sub-editor need not hesitate to introduce a spice of humour on occasion when the news lends itself to such treatment. The reader will appreciate it.

5. A SOUND GENERAL EDUCATION. The first class sub-editor must be a compendium of useful knowledge—a veritable human encyclopaedia. Therefore he should be at the utmost pains to cultivate his memory. The most attractive news is the unusual news. The sub-editor cannot draw a distinction unless he stores his mind with events which have occurred in the past. He must *know* in order that he may exercise his functions as a sub-editor adequately and well. Experience and the ability to profit by it, and a good memory: these are the

passports to the senior posts in a newspaper office. They are never attained by a mere humdrum, unimaginative adherence to technical routine.

6. **LAST BUT NOT LEAST—LUCIDITY.** Cultivate a simple and direct style of English. Avoid complicated and involved sentences. Never puzzle the reader—he hasn't time to disentangle a maze of words. Two short sentences are often better than a long one. As you should write legibly for the compositor—who also has no time to waste—so you should make your meaning crystal clear to the reader—and for the same reason.

## II

Sub-editors are mostly born—they are rarely made. (Chief among their needed qualities I would place—

**THE CRITICAL FACULTY.** Good sub-editors should be relentless critics and possessed of a passion for accuracy. Written statements are not necessarily facts, and not all deductions are sound. A cool, clear brain must apply to them the acid test of knowledge, or in the absence of knowledge a reference book. This implies

**A WIDE RANGE OF READING,** a mastery of modern politics (home and foreign), and an intelligent acquaintance with the latest scientific, commercial, and artistic developments. In short, a capacity to keep abreast of the times. He should also have

**A "NOSE FOR NEWS"**—a sensitive instinct for seeing a good news story below the surface where others only see a welter of words.

**A CONSTRUCTIVE MIND** is essential. There must be ability to present news on well-defined, orderly lines, with a sense of proportion, balance, and form. Modern newspapers are built up on a plan. Journalistic jerry-builders are not wanted in Fleet Street.

**ALERTNESS OF MIND AND A GREAT CAPACITY FOR WORK** also mark out a successful sub-editor. Decisions have to be made quickly and work done at high speed. Journalists who are naturally lethargic should avoid the sub-editor's room as they would the plague.

**ADAPTABILITY** is essential. London newspapers are as varied in their aims and methods as the sects in Christendom. A sub-editor should master all styles of journalism—heavy and light, popular and prosaic. He should be equipped to enter any office.

A command of good English, a gift of *précis* writing, the saving grace of humour, a sense of the dramatic also form part of the stock in trade of a sub-editor. And if he is a "dry" subject, so much the better for him and his chief.

## III

The good sub-editors on this newspaper have these qualifications in common—

1. They are safe.
2. They write simple, accurate English.
3. Their headlines tell the story, and each cross-heading mentions a fact.
4. Their handwriting is clear, and causes few printers' errors.
5. They can deal quickly with a new story, doing essentials first.
6. They keep in mind the special requirements of the paper.

These are all common-sense needs, and most of them will cause no trouble to a keen young man. Simple English—the very simple English of our picture papers—clear handwriting, with all names of people and places written in capitals, reading one's own paper through carefully every day to keep abreast of its policy; these are the ABC of sub-editing.

The one great difficulty is to become a safe man. There is no dodging the fact that the only safe sub-editor is one who has had years of experience. ("Thank God," say I, "otherwise we might be shot into the street at 40.")

You must learn sub-editing in the sub-editor's room, get to know the various traps, and watch for them every minute of the night.

The worst traps are—

**LIBELS.** You must get the books on the libel law and see exactly how a newspaper stands.

**SLIPS OF THE PEN.** Omitted words, split infinitives, saying dollars when you mean pounds, are common errors in a rush. A morning paper recently led off its front page with the heading "Warships Rushed to Cairo."

**SLIPS OF JUDGMENT.** Overdoing a police court case because it is difficult to condense. Giving too much of the prosecution and not a fair report of the defence. Cutting down late news too much, and exaggerating the value of early news.

So much for warnings. Here are some hints on what to do now—

1. Read the chief papers carefully. I have read *The Times* every day for twenty years and found this steady reading an enormous help in cultivating knowledge of men and affairs.

2. Spend a day or so in a good reference library. A sub-editor who does not know where to look things up is a waster of precious time.

3. Remember the chief popular interests are not books and philosophy, but

Women,  
Food, and  
Money.

4. Cater for the lazy man. Give him brief, comprehensive headlines, and brief, comprehensive summary introductions to reports.

5. The following sub-editors will never lack work, and will be prized almost like successful tipsters—

A lively but safe police court "sub."

A good foreign "sub."

A good copy-taster (man who reads all the news coming in and marks its value, with all necessary instructions to the sub-editors).

These men sell their brains in a rising market.

## CHAPTER III

### *A SURVEY OF THE WORK*

THE quantity and intricacy of sub-editorial work in the provinces vary with the status of the paper, from the small weekly to the great daily, sometimes national in its scope. Every paper, small as well as great, is the repository of the effusions of many outside correspondents, in addition to the people scattered about the constituency who send news, such as the village grocer who, in exchange for a free copy of the paper, will send paragraphs, often written on sugar paper. There are rural poets who claim to be heard, local historians and antiquaries, the growers of record marrows and potatoes, the auditors of the first cuckoo, the catchers of the biggest fish—one and all write to the editor, and all their productions need trimming and revising by somebody: the editor, sub-editor, or reporter. It not infrequently happens that slovenly copy obscures real news and good features, and the journalist seizes on these wherever they are to be found. Thus, even in the small office, without a regular "blue pencil" staff, the sub-editorial function must be performed by someone. These casual contributions by industrious scribes are not altogether unwelcome, especially in slack times, when there are columns to be filled and there is nothing much happening. There is always the final

resort to stereo columns such as "Home Hints," "Gardening Notes," "The Latest Fashions," etc., but matter written by a contributor, and having some local significance, is much to be preferred.

The importance of what the novelists call "local colour" has to be recognized. A very strong element in English public life is local patriotism, and the local paper is the exponent and the guardian of this quality of the public mind. Often it has been proved in the experience of competitive journalistic invaders of provincial territories that local pride, possibly prejudice, is a solid thing to run up against. The people have grown accustomed to their own style of journalism by generations of usage, and they do not readily accept the newer and more sensational standards of "chain" newspapers. Sub-editors, and other members of the staff, who have special local knowledge and training, and enjoy greater security of tenure than is to be found in many Fleet Street offices, interpret the local outlook correctly and work instinctively to the approved pattern. The judgment and experience of such men are of undoubted value to the older local papers when they are faced with the assault of the invader, though some of them are lured from their allegiance by tempting contracts offered by the newcomers. The fact remains that papers steeped in local tradition and accustomed to catering for a particular public can, if they are efficiently run, withstand the pressure of the "syndicated" Press. In earlier days, when a subsidiary of

Northcliffe Newspapers, Ltd., the projectors of a chain of papers all over the country, acquired the *Leicester Mail*, the controllers declared: "We believe we shall succeed in keeping the strong local affection for the paper, as the change over will mean a new and well-fitting suit for an old friend of the people of Leicester." The central editorial policy, as directed from London, was to ensure that the provincial papers were supplied with all the national news and suitable features, but to lay special emphasis on the importance of giving the greatest prominence to local news. National news was not given precedence over local affairs. It was claimed that provincial readers were giving sure indications of appreciation of the new journalism. The experiment, an extremely interesting one, has still to be tried out.

My own early experience confirms me in the views I have expressed. For five years I was articled to reporting on a weekly paper in Kent, which was built up to a considerable degree of prosperity by an energetic man who had himself risen from office boy to editor of a smaller weekly, and then started as proprietor in the larger town. He had an uncanny sense of local values, and amazing energy. In addition to managing the business side of the concern, he did most of the "subbing" and note writing himself, and I vividly remember the sense of wonder and respect with which I, a junior reporter returning in the early hours from some engagement, saw the light burning in his room at the office as he pursued his endless activities.



His paper was a model of a complete organ of local news and opinion. A still more striking instance of the same thing—on a larger scale—was the old *Western Morning News*, the staff of which I joined over 50 years ago and remained on for ten years. My chief was the late Mr. Albert Groser, whom West Country people still remember as the creator of a remarkably successful newspaper which stood for the particular type of public life and outlook characteristic of Devon and Cornwall—a people as clannish, as the Scots themselves. Still a junior reporter, but now entrusted with a news district, I regarded the sub-editors at the head office—some of them bearded, middle-aged men with an impressive air of wisdom and experience—with a certain amount of awe.

### *The London Daily*

But this is not a book of reminiscence and my immediate task is to make a survey of sub-editorial work. For this purpose I will write from the standpoint of a London morning daily, premising that the main principles and rules there observed are of general application to the work, in whatever sphere it may be undertaken. Let us then look in some detail at the work of this small body of men—only a fraction of the total staff of the paper, varying from 1,000 to 1,500 employees, but with an importance out of all proportion to its numerical strength.

The writer of a recent book on journalism aptly described them as “a great and modest

company of highly efficient technicians, of the very existence of whom, except as a group name, the public is ignorant." The sum total of their number in British journalism may be said to be "great," though in each office they are only a small proportion of the whole staff. One sub-editor may in a day or night revise the work of twenty reporters or more; this indicates the concentrated character of the work.

Everything that goes into the paper passes through the hands of the sub-editors, except the advertisements, the leading articles, which are supervised by the editor, and various special articles and features which are dealt with by an assistant editor. The work of experts and special writers all needs the keen sub-editorial eye for the detection of errors, the provision of headlines and general treatment in the way of correct paragraphing and proper display. It sometimes happens that the specialist who writes with authority on a particular subject is a bad grammarian and makes foolish mistakes in spelling. These have to be watched for and corrected. *The Times* for years ran a little feature introduced by Lord Northcliffe entitled "News in Advertisements," and in such case the advertisements do come within sub-editorial purview. Experienced reporters present their copy in the style of their paper and cause little trouble to the sub-editors, except when there is pressure on space and good matter has to be sacrificed. It takes a long time to learn thoroughly the style of a paper. A style book is provided for the guidance of the staff, and this is dealt with

later. The sub-editor is the custodian of "style" and has to keep a myriad points in mind in dealing with the varied mass of copy derived from sources ignorant of the particular rules of the paper.

The sub-editorial rooms are the converging points of all the streams of news. Most of it comes from the paper's own reporters and correspondents, written in London or telegraphed, telephoned or sent by train from the provinces, and cabled or telephoned from abroad. A mass also comes from the "agencies," and there is also a very considerable quantity of what is called "official" copy. This consists of all sorts of documents—MSS. of speeches from Ministers, public and commercial men of all sorts, anxious to be reported; blue books, white papers, communiqués from Downing Street and Government Departments; reports of Royal Commissions, Select Committees, and important commercial and industrial bodies, and an avalanche of typewriting from the many organizations which have adopted expert publicity for propaganda. I recall one particularly heavy night during a general election when I handled letters, manifestos, and programmes from the following—

National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.

Oxford University New Reform Club.

National Workmen's Council.

Temperance and Social Welfare Department of the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

The True Temperance Association.

Licensed Victuallers' Defence League.

Road Reform Association.

National Housing and Town Planning Association.

Ulster Association of Peace with Honour.

Sugar Beet Society.

"Middlesex Hospital Falling Down."

National Citizens' Union.

Free Trade Union.

Ulster Boundary Bureau.

Lastly, when vitality was getting low, came an election ultimatum from the British Undertakers' Association on the subject of funeral reform, together with a memorandum on the growing popularity of cremation and the dangers of premature burial. Shades of Edgar Allan Poe, this was the limit! Needless to say at such a time ruthlessness was the order of the night.

Sub-editorial arrangements vary in different London offices. In some the whole of the news supply, home and foreign, passes into one large room and is subject to the adjudication of one chief sub-editor. In *The Times* there are four rooms of sub-editors: home, foreign, financial and commercial, and sporting, with a total staff of about thirty men. There is a foreign, as well as a home, chief sub-editor, and this might be expected in Printing House Square, where foreign news has always been an important feature of the paper. The news rooms have telephone annexes where expert shorthand writers receive long dispatches from the capitals of Europe. Wireless services from America and other parts of the globe are now on the increase.

### *The Editorial Conference*

The arrival of the early men coincides with the holding of the afternoon editorial conference, which discusses a prepared schedule of the

paper. The news departments have been busy since early morning gathering material from all points of the compass, and the schedule shows in detail all the stories actual or expected, with estimates of their length. The advertisements and the features are also scheduled, a gross estimate of the whole contents of the paper is reached, and the proposed size of the issue shown. The assembled "heads" judge the quality of the news, the possibilities of expansion or contraction, and whether the paper is likely to be a tight one for space or whether there is a prospect—not very usual—of "letting things run." The conference is attended by all who hold executive posts, and here the chief sub-editors learn the editorial views on questions of policy and the comparative importance or unimportance of the various matters scheduled. Armed with the annotated schedule they are ready to tackle the night's work with their staffs.

### *The "Copy Taster"*

The first man to get to work in the room is the "copy taster," the man with the super-news palate, who has to handle and assess all the copy. In some offices, I believe, all the copy goes first to the chief sub-editor, who sorts and grades it and "gives it out," afterwards revising it as completed and sending it to the printer. But, generally speaking, this double task is regarded as too arduous for one man; hence the delegation of the first impact of the copy to the "taster," leaving the chief free to give all his

attention to the final revision. The "taster" has the schedule as a guide for the known stories, and the chief's advice when needed. On an easy night, when things go according to plan, the stories duly arrive and are dealt with on the basis of arranged space. The "taster" scans the copy, marks on it the heading required, notes any specially important or interesting points in it, and passes it to a sub-editor with any necessary hints or instructions. When the sub-editor has finished it, the copy passes round to the chief for approval, or otherwise, and if approved it is sent by pneumatic tube to the printer. Sometimes it is not approved. A headline is faulty, the pruning process is incomplete, some mistake in a name has been passed, and the copy is returned to the man who prepared it for rectification.

Meanwhile the copy is tumbling in and the taster gets more absorbed in his trying task of weeding out and spiking useless matter and finding real news, often buried in unsuspected places. It is his responsibility to miss nothing of value to the paper and not to put forward anything that is not worth its place. The severity of his choice varies with the space barometer. If extra pages have been added to the scheduled number owing to growing pressure and the threat of big news coming, he allows a little rein; if the night editor is adamant and sticks to his scheduled size, the work of compression grows grimly as the scale of values alters. What was a "top" goes down; what was a good little story with its double heading

becomes a "N.I.B." (News in Brief) or a mere filler, i.e. a paragraph without a head. Space problems are most acute on the "tabloid" papers, and the way in which the daily illustrated papers get all the news that matters into two or three small pages is a marvel of condensation. Their work is quite different from that on the bigger papers, but even there the greater amplitudes do not bring relief from space worries.

The cutting of stories in proof at the behest of the night editor, who is making up the paper, is a frequent thing. It is not pleasant to have to kill, one after another, the nice points of a story and to bring it down to hard fact, but little else remains after a heavy night. To avoid disaster and to assist the maker-up on the stone in the composing room, it is always wise to get the best news into the beginning of the story, so that a quick and easy cut at the end will not, at any rate, extinguish the main points. Most stories lend themselves to this kind of treatment, which, of course, is the best from the reader's point of view. For instance, in an inquest always put the verdict in the opening paragraph, and then give as much of the evidence and the Coroner's summing up as space will allow. Important decisions and vital points in every story should be brought out at the beginning. This serves not only the technical purpose of easy cutting, but gives the reader what he wants to know at once. Another point in cutting is to watch the headlines. If one of these lines is based on an excised passage, delete it and substitute another dealing with a

live point that remains in the story. Many amusing, and annoying, blunders have been made by the neglect of this simple rule.

### *High-speed Work*

Condensation is often high-speed work. In the tension of busy moments the brain of the competent man instinctively seizes the vital points and rejects the relatively unimportant. He knows, it is his business to know, what the public is really interested in, and his *précis* writing is dominated by that knowledge. The call for brighter and briefer news by the mass of readers, who are not students and have no time for research, has to be met, and the sub-editor's movements synchronize with the growing acceleration of life. News arrives more rapidly to-day than ever, and has to be disposed of with greater promptitude and brevity. Hence the need of well-stored minds capable of quick, decisive action. The same tendency is seen in literature. Solid books which had their vogue in Victorian days are out of fashion, and, to-day, the public are provided with sixpenny books of wisdom. So in the realm of ephemeral literature the tabloid paper has supplanted in the tastes of the million the solid and stately pages of a past generation. Compression is the order in most offices, and that is the field of the sub-editor. In the 1914-18 War, when people had only one main interest, one of the most widely circulated papers issued the edict that nothing was to exceed half a column outside the news from the battle fronts.



A tribute paid by Mr. J. A. Spender to W. T. Stead, one of his closest friends for 20 years, says that his power of reducing masses of detail to lucid statement was unequalled. "Give him the biggest blue book and he would have the heart out of it in half an hour, and a luminous summary omitting nothing of importance, going to press within the hour. His articles were like hewing a straight path through a tangled forest." Stead would have made a brilliant sub-editor if he had not been called to a higher platform. How many envy his gifts when they are called upon to get human stories out of dry-as-dust official documents.

There is a constant effort in "live" offices to improve the stories that come in by adding interesting facts, recalling historic parallels and incidents, for which the resources of the library and telephone are valuable. Very often a reporter will fail to recognize in the paper the contribution he handed in, with the twists and turns that have been made, the attractive headlines, the additions from agency copy of good supplementary matter, and the sub-editorial "write up." In these composite creations the sub-editor plays a large part. I remember when I began reporting in Fleet Street my news editor sent me to inquire about a new shipping service that was being started on the East Coast of Africa by a British line. I found that this enterprise was an extension to ports hitherto covered mainly by Germany by means of subsidized shipping. This interesting fact I duly noted in my report, and when it appeared

next morning it had been emphasized and enlarged by fact and a table of the rival services, with a map of the route, headed in big type "German monopoly broken." I was grateful to the sub-editor who thus appreciated the value of the news I had secured and made a stronger and better story of it. It was in the days when Anglo-German competition was at its height and any news bearing on it was highly topical.

In papers where write-up is the normal thing very few stories appear in their original form. They are, as a matter of course, knocked into the proper shape. A reporter very often, and very properly, gets enthusiastic about his story. It becomes the most wonderful piece of work that ever was, in his imagination, but when it is marshalled on the sub-editor's desk with all the rest it takes its rightful place in the general scheme, and therefore has to suffer change. When a new broadcasting station was being opened, a special correspondent made his report too highly technical for the general reader, and all his pet scientific terms had to be eliminated and the story cut to the portions which the average man might be expected to understand and be interested in. Some reporters lack the supreme gift of real story-telling, and the sub-editor has to supply, so far as he can, the missing quality.

### *An Effective "Write-up"*

Another case of effective write-up, which thoroughly justified the effort, comes to mind. Mr. John Burns, who always had the gift of

silence, and whose public appearances were therefore all the more striking, was announced as the chief guest at a dinner given by the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association in London early this year. This being his first public function since the War, the event was a notable one. It was treated variously by the papers. One that never gives way to emotion was content with recording in the first sentence that Mr. Burns made his first appearance in public since the War, but also recalled the pertinent fact that he was the author of the first Town Planning Act of 1909, when he was President of the Local Government Board. These facts were given without any embellishment, under the staid heading—

#### TOWN PLANNING ANNIVERSARY

##### MR. JOHN BURNS ON THE SLUMS

Contrast the same story as given in a popular paper devoted to the discovery of the human element. Its heading was—

## JOHN BURNS COMES BACK

### SILENCE BROKEN AFTER 17 YEARS

#### THE OLD ORATORY

The story was written in that vein, the *motif* being the strangeness of his feeling after so long

a lapse, how he began with hesitation as if wondering at the sound of his own voice, and then how he gained power and confidence as the great organ tones, which in days past had been unrivalled in the open air, once again took sway. It was recalled how seventeen years ago a stocky man with a bristling beard, wearing a blue reefer coat, slammed the door of No. 10 Downing Street and, with a fierce scowl, strode away swinging his arms. Altogether an excellent theme for a human write-up. When the Panama Canal was opened the Americans staged the bright idea of asking all their countrymen the world over to signalize the actual moment by raising the glass and drinking the toast: "Here's to Panama." The chief sub-editor saw the chance of a good story, and a little word picture was drawn in the room of knots of Yankees pledging the toast at all hours of the day and night under different skies and in romantic contrasts.

The sub-editor, I may repeat, is not necessarily a writing man. He has to handle efficiently stories from brilliant writers—stars that twinkle and coruscate in the firmament of Fleet Street—whose work he cannot hope to emulate. The qualities of sub-editor and of writer are distinct. The former is the paper's insurance against error of all kinds, much of which is committed by the aforesaid brilliant men. He handles raw material of priceless worth which needs his technical touch to prepare it adequately for the public eye. I admit that the work of the sub-editor is secondary in such

case, though important. But do not forget that most of the copy is of lesser quality and gives much more work, not only in removing ordinary defects of style and grammar, but in introducing correct order, laying emphasis on special points and even in re-writing. Here the work of the sub-editor is frequently more essential than that of the writer himself. Often all that the sub-editor has is the bare piece of news, the hard fact. When his judgment has placed a high value on it, then he has to put the gem in its proper setting. Again much of the credit in the result is due to the reporter whose vigilance and enterprise discovered the big news, but the bulk of the labour has fallen on the shoulders of the sub-editor.

A good test of sub-editorial ingenuity is a holiday season when there is no real news and when it is so difficult to escape from the "out-door festival," the "rush to the coast," the "summer snowstorm," the "high pressure at the post office" and other familiar friends. Parliament is on vacation, the law courts are up, and the papers have only the conferences of labour, educational, and other bodies to fill the gap. Sometimes the unexpected happens and a railway accident gives the lead, backed up with the tale of "previous disasters." Better still, a good crime mystery story may break loose, which will hold its place for days, for the public loves a mystery. It is a strange coincidence that great railway accidents have several times happened about the time of Christmas. To make effective stories out of Easter and

Whitsun conferences of the I.L.P., N.U.T., Miners, Labour Party, Oddfellows, Buffaloes, Rechabites, and other bodies of even less interest, is not always an easy matter. Then the sub-editor who specializes in manufactured leads gets to work, and perhaps finds a mildly exciting theme running like a thread through two or more of them, from which he skilfully weaves a story. Even so, the "machine-made lead" is obvious to the trained eye.

### *The "Different" Paper*

A master mind in this form of journalism was that of Lord Northcliffe, whose methods are so vividly portrayed by Mr. Tom Clarke. He insisted on the best brains of the office not being away during public holidays, because those were "awful times for news," and the cleverest men should be on tap to provide a bright paper and make the most of the meagre news. One day the only real bit of news was the running down of a cyclist, who was out with his sweetheart at Lewisham, by a motorist who drove on without stopping. The story was discussed at Conference.

It remained for Northcliffe to lift the story above the commonplace and make a big "splash" of it. He came in as I was finishing my narrative and he got me to tell it all over again. "That's a great story for a quiet day like this," he said, quickening his words as he went along. "Work it up. Work it up. Start a hunt for the motorist who drove on. The *Daily Mail* must bring him to justice. What is the colour of the missing car? Call it 'the Mystery of the Blue Car,' or whatever the colour may be. You must have an introduction something like this: 'A highway holiday starting in beautiful weather, with countless thousands of motors and bicycles on the road, bearing everywhere the huge population which is only beginning

to taste the joys of open-air travel, has been marred by a highway tragedy . . . and so on.'” Under the Chief’s inspiration we made this incident the peg on which to hang the general holiday story.

Next day Northcliffe on the telephone said : “ Well, the paper is ‘different.’ Look at the other papers with their long, dry screeds about holiday crowds, the same stuff that is printed every time out of cold storage.”

Difference in style of news handling may be given another illustration. Paper A allows no licence in heading and is not addicted to the news “write-up”; paper B is a popular one. The news was that Mr. W. R. Morris (now Lord Nuffield) had purchased Wolseley Motors, Ltd. Headings—

(A)

**WOLSELEY MOTOR  
BUSINESS**

**SALE TO MR. W. R. MORRIS**

(B)

**MR. MORRIS’S  
CHEQUE FOR  
£730,000**

---

**WOLSELEY MOTORS  
BOUGHT**

**A FIGHT WITH THE  
FOREIGNER**

**ROMANCE OF FORMER  
BICYCLE MENDER**

A brought out the point in the story that Mr. Morris was upholding British industry against the foreigner, but did not disclose the amount of the cheque. B wrote it up with "human" touches and got the points in the order of the headlines, with an inset picture of Mr. Morris.

To turn to more ordinary work, I will refer to what constitutes a large proportion of sub-editing, namely, political and other speeches. From these are rigorously excluded all formalities and familiar currencies and *clichés* of the "venture to assert" type. There is no room for anything but sentences with a definite purpose and meaning, sentences that do not repeat what is already well known, but add something new to a subject either by fresh fact or argument, or the new setting of an old fact or argument. Experience gives facility in finding the points that matter in a long speech. You must know what your paper has already given on the subject, so that a speaker is not allowed to waste space in retailing common knowledge. In the height of the Parliamentary season, and especially at election times, there is a spate of platform oratory, and the task of selecting what is worth printing is heavy. Most points of controversy are worn threadbare, and new points and interesting headlines have to be discovered. Sometimes a number of utterances will be given under a "box" or "label" head such as "political speeches," with a double head first for the leading speech and smaller black heads for the speeches following, grading down to plain caps for the lesser lights below. When the speeches



are divided up among several sub-editors, consultation is necessary to avoid headlines clashing. A keen eye is kept for doubles, and there is a constant quest for variety. In a long speech correct paragraphing and illuminating cross-heads are needed to assist the reader and avoid monotony. In one office the rule is that every cross-head must contain a fact. It is an elementary thing in paragraphing to make the break where a new subject, or a new branch of a subject, begins. In a speech running to half a column or more the first paragraph, a short one, is put in larger type.

### *Watching for Blunders*

Very often speeches come by wire, and the old "flimsy" (which happily is disappearing) is hard to read and handle. Blunders in transmission are frequent, and by some perversity of fate they often occur at crucial points in the speech. A key word is wrongly rendered, and there is some awkward blank in the copy. If there is time a request for a corrected version is sent to the Post Office, but to get this means a reference to the place of origin, perhaps in the north, or Ireland, and the clock never stops. Otherwise the sub-editor has to find the missing word or words and to substitute the correct word by intelligent deduction. I noted in one telegraphic report of a speech by Mr. Baldwin a curious collection of errors, due either to faulty transcription of shorthand notes or mishearing by the reporter, or to the telegraphist's inaccurate sending—

injuries	for	interest
concourse	for	caucus
moment	for	omens
fabric	for	subject

Another message gave "developed" for what might be either "devoted" or "distinguished." The sub-editor has to make his choice and take the risk.

A curious lapse occurred in the report of a speech by Mr. Arthur Henderson, the Foreign Secretary, who was made to refer to the "work of disarmament contemplated in the Treaty of Marseilles." The substitution of Versailles was, of course, found in the next edition. The "ravishes" of the death-watch beetle were alleged in one telegram to be the cause of damage to a church timbered roof. Much amusement was caused one night by the following tape message, which split an infinitive very thoroughly and misquoted a key word: "Lambeth Guardians are to urge the Government to seriously consider the urgent question of the sterilization of the mentally unfit not later than the age of publicity and thus save untold suffering and expense."

Then there are absurdities perpetrated by the speakers themselves, and to tinker about with verbatim reports is a delicate matter. But, even so, statesmen must be saved from mistake. One was made to declare: "We look to the coming generation to repair the irreparable waste of the Great War." The sub-editor had to repair the speech. Another Minister delivered himself of this glimpse of the obvious: "Any unnecessary waste of public expenditure

through inefficient methods or inadequate equipment is not economy, but is a material waste of expenditure." He must have been thankful for the intervention of a friendly sub-editor who in this case did not follow the maxim: "Give what the man says."

Two instances of the need of arithmetical vigilance.

A Standing Committee of the Board of Trade was inquiring into an application by the Sheffield Cutlery Manufacturers' Association for an Order for marking all imported cutlery. One witness declared that the total annual import of one type of American safety razor blades into this country if spread out would cover England eight times over. This duly appeared in print in several papers. A distinguished Cambridge professor, with a taste for statistics and a sense of humour, wrote the following day: "The area and population of England are known, as also are the dimensions and weight of safety razor blades: a simple calculation shows that nearly 800,000,000 tons of this particular type of blade reaches our shores annually, and that every year each man, woman, and child consumes on the average about 20,000,000 blades, weighing between 19 and 20 tons. Taking the cost of the blades at the moderate figure of 2d. a piece, each inhabitant of the country spends over £150,000 per annum on safety razor blades; this tells us who pays the super-tax. Whilst disclaiming any desire to interfere with the innocent amusements of the people, I feel that this safety razor business is being overdone;

traffic will be impeded, and the scenery spoilt when the discarded blades cover our fair England eight deep."

A more prosaic case was a speech on agricultural economics. The telegraphed report said: "It only required six to seven acres to produce all our own wheat." An obvious absurdity, due to the omission of "millions," but the sub-editor must be sure, so a reference to Whitaker revealed our wheat acreage, our production, and our imports. The rest was a simple calculation, which warranted the insertion of the missing millions.

Figures should always be verified. Errors have been found even in blue books and in statements issued by accountants. It is the rule in most offices that foreign money values and measures must be converted into their English equivalents, be they dollars, roubles, marks, francs, lire, kroner, metres, kilos, or what-not. It often adds clearness and interest to a story consisting largely of masses of figures to set out central features in tabular form. For instance, if a railway or a motor-coach company announces new fares for certain routes, it is of assistance to the reader to put the places and the fares into a table which shows him at a glance what he wants to know. To dig out vital data from a huge body of statistics involves trouble, but the result is worth the time spent.

### *Constructive Stories*

Let us consider what I may call constructive stories, which are the work of the senior men, whose experience and knowledge fit them to

handle masses of copy in the rough and bring order out of chaos. These are big wrecks and storms, railway accidents involving great loss of life, strikes on a national scale, widespread floods, a coronation or a Royal funeral, an air disaster such as R 101—all such bring messages from many sources and have innumerable “ends” to them, which need sorting out and converting into consecutive narrative. The mere mass is calculated to appal the inexperienced. A sure touch and quick judgment are required to co-ordinate the overflowing material; a high degree of confidence born of long training alone enables a man to have the finished product ready—displayed story, introduction, headlines, summary and contents bill—in time for the edition.

Time is of the “essence of the contract” in the sub-editor’s room. The weaving of a clear, striking, and well-balanced story from a tangled skein of many threads is a formidable job in any circumstance, but when time is short and the first edition approaches steadily, relentlessly, the need for clarity of mind and firm, decisive work is greater than ever. The wise man makes a general estimate of the “weight” of a story from a hurried glance through the copy, and decides the scale on which it can be handled for the first edition. If the quantity and length justify it, he is given help and “farms out” sections to colleagues.

The Budget belongs to this class of story. In the case of papers that deal with it fully—and all papers treat it as the biggest news on the first night—there is a great deal to be done in

the way of choosing tables from the Treasury statement, showing the national accounts from many angles, and illustrating the effects of proposed new taxation, or changes in existing taxes and duties. In addition there is the Chancellor's speech, which is dealt with by the Gallery and Lobby men, but all comes into the ken of the sub-editor in charge of the whole story. He has to make all new points crystal clear so that the reader may understand readily the state of the nation's finances, and the individual taxpayer may realize how he is affected. To present a Budget clearly and accurately is a good piece of work, more especially when new burdens are imposed or there is any change in methods of grading or collection.

Sometimes it happens with a big story like a revolution abroad, or an abdication, or an earthquake, or the like, that for some reason or other your own correspondent fails to come in for the first edition and you have to rely on scraps from agencies and local correspondents. The story has to be built from exiguous material pending the arrival of the graphic connected narrative from your own man.

In all these dramatic events the actual news narration is led off with an introduction written by the sub-editor. Generally it is of double column width, giving at a glance the main facts. Display devices appropriate in these cases are dealt with in another chapter on typography.

Some London papers have to get their first editions away early in order to provide the breakfast-table paper for distant places. This

difficulty has been met by printing duplicate editions in the north, but not in all cases. The task imposed on sub-editors by this early "cut" is exacting. Big stories have to be left in mid-air and late important news does not come in time for the first edition. Thus when the pages have been plated they are immediately hauled back and the work of reconstruction tackled at once. Sometimes it means making entirely new pages, and sub-editorial work is doubled. It inevitably means bigger staffs.

Where papers have northern printing plants, private wires are installed in the offices and are used for sending copy prepared at the head office and make-up instructions, ensuring exact duplication with the London editions. Some of the large provincial papers have considerable staffs in London whose copy is sent over private wires. These wires also carry the pictures sent by the new processes. The late sub-editors of these papers in Fleet Street have to go through the early editions of the London papers and send the "early morning" wires containing summaries of the main news and comment.

As showing the keenness of the "provincials" in beating the "Londons," I have heard of a London editor of an important group of provincial papers being got out of bed at 2 a.m. to write a hurried leader on a late news subject. The leader was duly telephoned and given the prominence it was worth as a special and exclusive feature.

When I hear of sub-editors who are censured or "fired" for making a mistake, I think of

Patti who at one of her numerous farewell concerts forgot the words of "Home, Sweet Home," although she had been singing it all her life. The failure of the human machine, even in its most perfect form, is a certainty at some time or other. Even an engine-driver, entrusted with the lives of hundreds of people, sometimes fails. So a sub-editor, though possessed of more than the ordinary share of infallibility, sometimes gets the wrong sow by the ear. Although this happens to the best of craftsmen the lapse is dangerous and there is constant effort to prevent it. To ensure against it the big offices adopt elaborate precautions. There are censors at work in some part of the building reading all proofs—barristers with sharp eyes for legal perils; assistant editors quick to detect blemishes in style and grammar, and blunders in policy. This explains the occasional visits of a silent messenger to the chief sub-editor and the placing on his desk of a proof marked with some query which may convict even the ablest sub-editor of an unsuspected error.

### *Some Subtle Perils*

These things must be subtle to escape notice. The obscure *double entendre*, the hidden absurdity which may give *Punch* an opening, sometimes gets through the guard even of one who answers to an impromptu definition once given by a colleague—

What is a sub-editor? One who has leanings  
In harmless phrases to see dubious meanings.



Duty ranges from eliminating concealed libels from a speech, or a criticism, to the placing of a French accent in the right place. Although the old rule "when in doubt leave out" is a sound one, there is such a thing as a too meticulous standard. Common sense, backed by solid knowledge, is often vindicated when an apparent risk is taken. But I must beware of giving a dangerous incentive. However, an illustration of my meaning is the libel case once based on the use of the word "story" in a heading. The sub-editor had employed it in its ordinary sense, but the plaintiff argued that it implied something discreditable. The Judge held that the word was used in its natural and reasonable sense and the newspaper was vindicated. I am devoting a chapter to the legal side of the work.

Questions of policy often give anxiety, and it is always advisable to submit points of doubt to the chief sub-editor, who will, if necessary, get a ruling from above. Where matter is tendentious, this course is the safe one. This aspect of the sub-editor's work was amusingly hit off in a recent "dinner edition" of the *Daily Mail*—

The Slider Trophy. A team of the *D.M.* sub-editors is in training for next year's Slider Trophy contest, a prize being awarded for the most skilful skater on thin ice.

Always be chary of records. It is risky to say that anything is the first of its kind or the largest or longest, or that someone is the oldest living person. Once a woman was elected as sheriff of a county and the heading was put up "First woman sheriff," although in the text

the cautious phrase was used "said to be." But the opening was taken by the inevitable correspondent, who wrote to explain that centuries ago a woman held the office, and not long ago she herself had been elected a sheriff, but could by no means claim to be the first of her kind. As to longevity, the news that an ancient Turk, somewhere about the century and a half old, was wandering about America and Europe was sufficient to warn against rash assertions.

A knowledge of natural history might have prevented another amusing error. A message from Yorkshire stated that raids on game in a certain district had been explained by the capture of "a huge merlin hawk." Next day came the unfailing letter. The merlin hawk, it was explained, is a very small bird and is quite common in the county of the broad acres.

Dates must be closely watched. Official and other documents are often issued to the Press in advance with a "release date" stated. If this intimation is not sufficiently bold it is apt to be overlooked and premature publication is the result. An important instance was the Royal Commission on Coal. The evidence of the coal owners was awaited with much interest, and a statement of their case was issued in advance for the convenience of the papers. One paper published it straightway, although all the others observed the instruction not to use it until the material was actually placed before the Commission in public sitting. It was a mistake for which there was little excuse.

At times, copy giving the dates of forthcoming

events is wrong, and the calendar check should always be applied. For instance, if the copy says that something is to happen on Wednesday, 12th May, and if 12th May is a Tuesday, who is to say which is the correct date and day? A reference back to the author is necessary, if the copy is worth troubling about.

### *Contents Bills*

Contents bills are not primarily intended to be works of humour, but sometimes they are unconsciously funny products of an unwary mind. One or two classic examples are appended—

**MR. BALDWIN  
HITS OUT**

---

**THREE BELFAST MEN  
INJURED**

**GREAT NATIONAL  
DISASTER**

**D. A. THOMAS  
SAVED**

## Austen Chamberlain at Birmingham

### Remarkable Escape of Gas

The victims in the first two cases were so amused with the bills that they secured copies for preservation. Mr. Thomas (afterwards Lord Rhondda) had his framed and placed in Cardiff City Hall. It referred to the destruction during the War of the *Lusitania* from which he escaped. Effective contents bills are always in demand. The *Star* has a style in this matter which is not badly shown in its bill on a record flight to Australia—

## GREAT SCOTT!

When the result of the hectic by-election in St. George's, Westminster, with its "Press Lords'" campaign, was declared, the *Manchester Guardian's* bill was—

## ST. GEORGE SLAYS THE DRAGON

During the War the sinking of a troopship in the Baltic gave occasion for a novel bill—

## GERMAN REGIMENT SUNK

A guiding rule in writing contents bills is to arouse interest without giving away the news. For instance a bill worded: "Bank rate lowered to 3 per cent" is wrong. It should be "Bank rate decision." A clever contents bill promotes the sale of the paper. The headline is a different case, because the paper has been purchased and the reader is entitled to the "delivery of the goods." News of the widest interest is the subject of the "general" bill, but local bills are often sent out when there is a story of value from a particular district. Circulation staffs are always keen on promoting area sales. A story of special interest to universities would be billed in all university centres; and news and articles

affecting coast resorts or mining or cotton districts, for example, are similarly treated. It has happened, but not often, that the absence of news has been big news in itself, as with one of the adventurous flights of recent years, when there was an ominous silence from the ocean over which the aviators were travelling. The bill was: "No news of Atlantic fliers."

### *Foreign Sub-editing*

Foreign news is vastly interesting, and its efficient handling demands special qualifications. The process of learning the topography, the racial characteristics, the politics and the religions of the countries which are news sources—the range is world-wide in these days of universal communications—is an endless one. Languages are useful and necessary. In most foreign room staffs there are men competent in French, German, Italian, and Spanish, and in some there are men familiar with the hieroglyphics of the East, and even capable of writing Limericks in Chinese. It is not often that messages by cable are sent in a foreign language, though sometimes brief and important ones are; but the Press of other countries has to be read and studied. Cabling is an art in itself, and the sub-editor's task is measured by the way in which messages are transmitted. When the cost of sending is reckoned at shillings a word, abbreviation and skeletonizing are, of course, essential, and these are occasionally done in so inefficient a manner that the message is hopelessly obscured. Abbreviations should be

discreet and not lavish ; full stops necessary to make the sense clear should be inserted. In its suggestions to foreign correspondents a leading newspaper says that it is false economy to cut down messages until they become unintelligible ; that by a consistent method of abbreviation it should be possible safely to omit about 25 per cent of the words. Correspondents are urged to prepare their telegrams in full before deleting the superfluous words, and then to read them over finally with an eye to possible pitfalls for the sub-editor. Would that this sensible advice were always followed. It would save many an anxious conference between bewildered journalists.

“Writing-up” is more necessary in foreign than in home news because of the customary brevity of messages. Alert correspondents abroad keep their headquarters well posted in the background of the news, so that often the receipt of a news “flash” will release a flood of interesting matter already in hand for an expected development. The building up of big foreign stories from a variety of news sources is fascinating work that has often to be done. Codes have to be understood, and weird skeletons clothed with flesh. The sub-editor who is on late duty has to be informed of the operative codes arranged with foreign correspondents, so that he can handle messages in the early hours. I remember one unfortunate man who, by some oversight, had not been apprised of the current code, and who received a cablegram which he was utterly unable to interpret. The code was safely locked up somewhere in the office, and a

frantic search was futile. Result: the paper missed the news.

### *A Sea-serpent Episode*

Mr. Wickham Steed puts on record an amusing story of a sea serpent and a stupid sub-editor. A South Australian correspondent of *The Times* cabled, at a cost of 5s. a word, a long account of a huge sea serpent alleged to have been seen off that coast. Moberly Bell, the manager, thought it too costly a piece of folly, and the correspondent had to seek other work. It was delicately hinted that sea-serpent tales could be invented more cheaply in London. Hearing that *The Times* had parted with its Adelaide correspondent the head of a news agency offered the services of its man in that city. Bell accepted the offer and indicated the kind of news wanted (important political events, condition of crops, prospects of the wool clip, etc.), "but no sea-serpents." He told the news agency manager the story of the correspondent's downfall. The agency service went on satisfactorily for a time, until one day a message about the wheat harvest concluded with the words: "Bishop Adelaide found Colwyn Bay dead." Cables are often "omnibus" like this. The sentence was detached and sent to the obituary department, which produced a memoir of the said departed bishop, and this duly appeared next morning.

Later the Postmaster-General, a brother-in-law of the bishop, appeared at *The Times* office full of wrath. "What do you mean by killing



my brother-in-law?" he demanded. "He is not dead at all. I have spent a pot of money cabling condolences to my sister, who replies that her husband is alive and perfectly well. I have ordered mourning for the whole family. You must rectify your false news, publish an apology, and pay me compensation." Bell expressed his regret and paid compensation. He sent for the head of the news agency and said that their Adelaide man had landed him in a pretty mess. A cable had better be sent to the Adelaide man for an explanation. The original cablegram in the possession of the agency was produced, and there were the words: "Bishop Adelaide found Colwyn Bay dead."

But they were followed by a broad blue pencil mark. "Hallo, what's this?" exclaimed Bell. "Something has been struck out." "Oh," answered the agency man, "the missing words are 'sea-serpent 30 yards long.' Your instructions said you wanted no sea-serpent, so the sub-editor in charge struck those words out."

### *Some Regular Jobs*

A few of the regular and routine jobs may be noted. Copy of very irregular value comes daily from the law and police courts. Bow Street and the Old Bailey provide the most interest, but the police court cases, many of which are still done by the old-time "liners" on flimsy, are mostly food for the spike. High Court cases are, of course, on a very different plane, and by their importance demand considerable space. Since the severe regulation of

the reports by statute the Divorce Court has been shorn of much of its sensational appeal.

The *London Gazette* makes its appearance on Tuesdays and Fridays, and has to be carefully digested. Sometimes announcements of the greatest news value are contained in it, concealed in the usual mass of official notices of the routine order. An expert eye is given to this potential news source. Wills and bequests have likewise to be combed for interesting matter; and even diocesan magazines are scanned in some offices for anything out of the ordinary. A news editor of my acquaintance carries his researches as far as *Notes and Queries* for the material for stories.

Summaries have to be written of all the stories of any size, giving the main point and the page reference. The writing of telling summaries and of real "briefs" is quite a small art in itself. Then, too, contents bills have always to be thought of, and the night editor appreciates the offer of striking bills.

Helpful and informative footnotes are often desirable, and indeed a story sometimes needs one. One of the factors that has always to be taken into account is the short memory of the public. An isolated piece of news that may be perfectly intelligible to the trained mind of the journalist, whose duty it is to follow events closely, needs interpretation and explanation for the ordinary reader, and he is the individual whom the sub-editor should always have in mind. In many stories the setting can best be provided in the introduction, but sometimes it

is more fitting to embody the necessary points in a footnote. An illuminating addendum to the dispatch of a special correspondent can supply any missing link in the chain of fact. One of the few compliments that ever came my way from "The Chief" was earned by a footnote to a Washington message during the War which referred to a speech on finance by Bonar Law. As it stood, the message needed supplementing for the non-expert reader; so a footnote explaining what Bonar Law had said was appended. It was quite a simple and obvious thing to do, but the unusual sequel of a little "bouquet" fixed it in my mind. Neither sub-editors nor other ranks either expect or receive a pat on the back very often. Absence of criticism is the negative expression of satisfaction.

Co-ordination is necessary between the picture page and the news departments, and the caption writers generally submit their work to the news sub-editors for the verification of facts. In a picture of a railway accident the number of killed and injured in the caption must agree with the figures in the news story, when, as in many cases, they appear on different pages. When a delightful snapshot of the first lambs is printed, the sub-editor with some knowledge of the pastoral pursuit is referred to, as to the breed of sheep shown and the state of the lambing season. The staff photographer returns from a Royal show with pictures of the champion bull, heifer, or steer, and collaboration with the man who handles the news story is essential to ensure accuracy in the names of the winners

and in sex-denominations. You must not call a Shorthorn a Friesian; nor must you follow the example (? legendary) of the Fleet Street sub-editor who passed a paragraph about a fight between a stoat and a mangel-wurzel.

Pictures are a constant source of anxiety. In groups of people it is so easy to give the wrong names in the caption. Once, owing to the turning of a negative, the central figure in a ceremonial episode was shown in the printed picture wearing his sword on the right instead of the left, and another person in the same group had his medals on the wrong breast.

### *Value of Specialism*

Passing allusion has been made elsewhere to the advantage of specialism. Most sub-editors have a hobby or a speciality which is useful in work. With a large staff it would indeed be a strange bit of copy if not one was able to deal with it in a knowledgeable way. Doubtless the sub-editorial expert in music was taking a night off on the occasions which gave rise to a criticism in Whitaker for this year, in the section "The Year's Music." It runs: "Sometimes when the critics in the MS. venture on an opinion worthy of a musician's attention, it has been ruthlessly deleted by a soulless fellow charged with the sub-editing of their copy, and the space was filled with the names of distinguished—and undistinguished—people forming the audience. Servants' hall news!"

There is a growing tendency for journalists to pass over to publicity work, for which they

have the best qualifications. This means that sub-editors are being increasingly assailed with astute propagandism of all kinds. The Press agent-cum-journalist knows how to give news interest to his "boosting" stories, and this kind of copy cannot safely be spiked without examination. A great deal of it gets into a certain class of papers, but in the big offices the sub-editors are proof against trade and professional propaganda, however skilfully disguised as news. At the same time it must be agreed that trade and industry produce many interesting stories with real news value, and this field has hitherto been neglected by many.

Sport, finance, and commerce are outstanding features in all the chief papers, and the men engaged in sub-editing in those departments have special knowledge and experience, fully entitling them to rank as experts. Sport is claiming a larger share of public interest than ever, and the proper handling of each game requires special knowledge. Some of the most skilful headline work is found on the sports pages, especially at crowded week-ends in the height of the season.

Financial and commercial sub-editing is a distinct branch for which special training is essential. Messages dealing with the money markets of the world, the exchanges, international and national finance, produce markets, and commercial affairs generally, have their own vocabulary and their own characteristic phrasing, and to handle them demands expert knowledge. The writers on finance in the chief

papers have the status of economic authorities, and the sub-editors in this sphere are not far behind. At times they have to write "city notes" themselves. One of the nightly jobs is the compilation of the New York "parity table," for which special ready reckoners are used.

### *Admonitions in Brief*

A few admonitions based on long experience may be given in the form of brief points—

Master your material by careful reading and get a grip of the essentials.

Leave nothing to chance or luck, as mistakes, once made, cannot always be overtaken.

Your own views on politics, religion, or anything else must not be allowed to warp your judgment; remember you are the exponent of your paper's outlook.

Check all names and titles by the reference books. (This applies especially to Court and social news and to ceremonial and other reports, carrying lists of names.)

Familiarize yourself with the initials in general use for public bodies; as an instance the three railway unions: R.C.A., N.U.R., A.S.L.E. & F. These mystic titles are in such general use that it is wise to keep an index book in which to enter them up for handy reference. Papers to-day swarm with initials, essential to abbreviate a host of ponderous war-time titles. There are many other useful bits of information not readily found in the reference books which can be similarly treated.

Beware of local correspondents who gather

news from a wide area by "milking" the local papers. They often send stale, unreliable, and inaccurate copy.

If your handwriting is good, keep it so; if it is bad try to make it better. Don't give printers or readers the necessity of making queries. Send out your copy in workmanlike style.

When you first join a staff study your paper and master its methods and style.

A warning about date lines. If you convert a message "written for the paper," with the usual "yesterday" in it, into an F.O.C. message with place and date line, do not forget to alter "yesterday" to "to-day," and *vice versa*.

Look out for crude mistakes, such as "this morning at 11 a.m."; "knots per hour"; "two aeroplanes came in behind one another"; and circumlocutions, such as "adverse climatic conditions" (bad weather); "he succeeded in stopping" (he stopped); "hours of work previously in operation" (former working hours). And misspelt words: accomodate, apparantly, proceedure, harrass, Field Marshall, represent a brood of hardy survivors.

Do not place too much faith in the well-worn word "alleged." If a statement is really dangerous it will not save you, though there are times when it furnishes a certain safeguard. Do not use it unnecessarily. It is absurd to say that a man was brought before a Court on an "alleged charge." The charge is made, not alleged, and is itself the allegation.

In cutting down a long document be careful to keep the thread of the speech or the narrative; to

do this it is often necessary to write in a line or two to preserve the pith of a deleted passage and provide the requisite connecting link.

If a story you have promises a follow-up, suggest it to the news editor. He will welcome it.

Get to understand wherein Scottish customs differ from English. Don't be floored by "homologate" and "avizandum," which will sometimes decorate a message from over the border.

Do not resent a query or a suggestion from the readers ("correctors of the press"), who, bringing a fresh mind to bear on a story, sometimes detect a sub-editorial slip.

Do not despise small points; make your copy as perfect as possible for the printer. It is the little foxes that spoil the vines.

### *Nautical "Don'ts"*

The following practical notes by a journalist who served his apprenticeship in a naval port are taken from the *Journalist*, to which they were contributed by "R.V.W."—

Don't say "on" a ship, but "in" a ship. A sailor no more lives on a ship than a landsman lives on a house. The most glaring error I ever saw in this connection was a report of a man "on" a submarine. He must have been a limpet.

Don't refer to a ship as "it." Ship is one of the few English substantives which has a gender—feminine.

Don't call all warships "battleships." When in doubt, call them plain warships, which is a comprehensive term.

Don't call a ship a "boat." Boats are small, open craft, which ships carry at their davits or in which watermen disport themselves.

Don't talk about the "commander" of a ship unless you mean a naval officer with three stripes on his sleeve. The man in charge of a warship is always called "captain," irrespective of his real rank in the navy list, whilst the tin god who controls the destinies of a merchant vessel is officially the "master."



Don't say "cast" anchor. Try casting one yourself first! Conrad is reported to have shot a reporter who used this expression. The correct form is "dropped anchor" or "anchored."

Don't say "aboard," but "on board."

Don't say "member of the crew." Get around it by calling him a seaman, a fireman, or "one of the crew."

Don't use the word "bluejacket" or "Jack Tar," or "handyman," or "middy." All are taboo.

Don't forget that, in conversation, all naval officers without brass hats are plain "mister"—even those *with* brass hats are "mister," if they have colours between their sleeve stripes denoting that they belong to the non-combatant branches. Commanders are given the courtesy rank of "captain" on social occasions.

Don't write "fo'c's'le" or any such abortion. It's written forecastle, same as "Chumley" is written Cholmondeley and "Beever" is written Belvoir.

Don't use any naval, marine, nautical, or seafaring expression unless you are sure of it; you can always get around it, or ask someone who knows.

Correspondence has recently appeared on the question whether the definite article should be used before a ship's name. On this point a naval officer with wide journalistic experience writes me—

Sailors, except for the sake of brevity, as in signalling, use the definite article before a ship's name. A writer has just dedicated his book to "all who sail in Rodney." The correct expression should be "to all who sail in the Rodney." Another mistake I have had to correct concerns the use of the words "way" and "weigh." We weigh anchor in order to get under way.

Courts martial have a procedure of their own and sometimes there are little irregularities in the reports sent in. I once had the advantage of a pronouncement from a high quarter. It is rather a good sample of "officialese," but it may be useful to give it—

Where the plea to a charge is "not guilty" the finding of the Court therein is, under Military and Air Force law, only pronounced in open court if it is a finding of acquittal. Consequently when an accused has pleaded "not guilty" to a charge,

a report published before promulgation that he has been found guilty can only be based on an inference drawn from the silence of the Court regarding their finding on that charge. While in the majority of cases this inference is logical and correct, two points must be borne in mind: (a) no finding of "guilty" is valid until it has been duly confirmed; (b) in various classes of offences it is open to the Court to find the accused "guilty" of a cognate and usually lesser offence. If I might venture to suggest a form of words which would in a like case be both accurate and innocuous, it would be to the following effect—at the conclusion of the usual report of the proceedings, and any finding of acquittal pronounced, a paragraph might be added indicating that the finding and sentence of the Court on the remaining charge or charges, if any, are subject to confirmation and will be promulgated in due course.

This applies to Army and Royal Air Force Courts Martial.

### *Examples Good and Bad*

This chapter may fitly include an actual sample of practical work. Below are given two messages: A, sent by a truly local correspondent, which is a good example of how not to do it, and B, the same subject handled in competent fashion. Both were sent to a national daily which had no room, and no taste, for the parochial touches that might suit a local weekly. The messages are printed just as they reached the sub-editor in telegraphic form (names and key words that might indicate the locality being omitted)—

#### A

Consequent upon a mayoral mtg o ——— townsmen / inquiries mde by / local commee wi view to rehabilitate / boro wi new industries are bng furthered by an advisory brd o representative men and women o industrl and other local sections and ——— is now on / tiptoe of expectation ——— ex mayor as chrmn o commee cncllr ——— Mr. ——— and others had assiduously devoted themselves to this outstanding question and it was upon initiative of councillor ——— seconded by Mr. ———

and supported by councillor — that the advisory board was brought into being what is more immediately under consideration is question of encouraging by measure of local financial subscription / establishment by a company on / site of / old world renowned — works of a — works such as would probably take two years to build and would then give employment to fifteen hundred men. Industrial representatives will incidentally put the position before their respective organisations it being suggested that the eight thousand miners might take up between them total of eight thousand one pound shares other inhabitants to swell this quota to say fifty thousand pounds towards a total capital of say 150 thousand pounds an engineering expert who has had much experience abroad and favours — site will again be in consultation with / town representative he thinks that a company the launching of which would be encouraged by local cooperation should work profitably in / manufacture of —, which are in growing demand for various purposes and are at present imported to large extent if present discussions should lead to formation of this proposed company / owners of — site will charge no rent for first five years report by advisory board will be made to another mayoral meeting

### B

An advisory board has been appointed by — Corporation to consider proposals for starting manufacture of — on the site of the dismantled — works stop Engineer with whom sub-committee of corporation has been in consultation, is reported to have expressed opinion that — could be produced at — at fair competitive prices, and suggested if inhabitants were prepared to find money for purchasing machinery, working capital might be obtained outside stop Further suggested Government be approached for £50,000, and that wage-earners cooperate with tradespeople and others by acquiring £1 shares, if necessary by instalments stop Stated that owners of the — site prepared to let ground-rent free to any company establishing an industry there, for first five years of its occupation stop Proposals have created widespread interest in town, which has unemployed population about 8,000 suggested plant would give employment to 1,500 workers at outset.

### *“Style” Books*

There is so much variety and latitude in English spelling, the use of compounds and capitals, and punctuation, to say nothing of the larger questions of literary “style,” that the

chief newspapers—all those with a “personality” of their own—have prepared a “style book” for the guidance of their staffs. Sub-editors new to an office always have to study these interesting little products because one of their more important duties is to “keep to style.” With experience this becomes almost automatic, although, with modern additions to the language and changes in taste, the most conservative of papers are subject to revision of rules.

Etymological experts themselves differ at times, so contradictions and divergences in these style books may well be expected. An instance is the termination “ise” or “ize.” One book lays it down—

The English *z*, far from being an “unnecessary letter,” is a useful one, which should be preserved in its proper place. Where the termination of a verb has been formed directly or by analogy from a Greek—*ιζειν*, *z* is usually right in English. But similar terminations not so derived must be distinguished, where *s* is etymologically necessary; and literary usage has in certain cases made *s* the best style even where *z* is possibly in accordance with etymological propriety. Instances are: advertise, analyse, chastise, circumcise, compromise, enterprise, supervise, surprise, etc. A balance of English usage, and correct pronunciation, similarly prescribe *s* in the nouns formed on the same model; e.g. chastisement, enfranchisement, advertisement (spelt and pronounced differently from the American “advertizement,” which follows

the usual American spelling "advertize"). Apart from such examples, *z* is to be used; e.g. civilize, baptize, realize, recognize, organization.

The American style of writing "labor," "honor," etc., however much it may be justified as a reversion to older English usage, is opposed to the best contemporary English practice, and is not to be adopted.

Another book states that the "Oxford Dictionary" and the "Authors' and Printers' Dictionary" are used as authorities, but "there are instances where, for adequate reasons—mainly convenience and old-established custom—they are not followed." For instance, all words ending with "ize" in both dictionaries are spelled in this office with an "s," as in "specialise."

The foregoing are sufficient to illustrate conflicting customs. The great thing is to get uniformity and consistency in the one paper, however much its style may differ from others. A few of the more usual rules may be quoted to indicate the kind of knowledge that a sub-editor has to accumulate—

**POSSESSIVE CASE.** Use the 's wherever possible. Singular: Jones, Jones's; plural: Joneses, Joneses'. Where the *s* is silent it should be omitted, as in "conscience' sake."

**PREFIXES.** Omit the hyphen usually, but in such words as pre-exist, re-elect, pre-war, it must be used. One paper prints "co-operation," but another "cooperation."

**ITALICS.** Names of plays, operas, revues, and films should be in italics, also titles of newspapers and periodicals; names of books and

songs in Roman. Foreign words that have been taken into English currency need not be put in italics.

FIGURES. Spell single figures; 10 and upwards, figures. Sentences must not begin with figures, i.e. "Fifty miles away", not "50 miles away."

Other rules govern the use of "a" and "an" in relation to the *h* mute; "or" and "nor"; adopt "close" and "open" styles of punctuation; prohibit the use of the split infinitive; warn that "alternative" means only *one* other way; restrict "christening" to its strict and proper religious use (a ship is "named," not "christened"); call attention to common errors such as "knots *per hour*"; and point out that solicitors are not "counsel" (only members of the Bar are); that "epidemic" is properly used only with reference to disease (not burglaries, fires, etc.), and so on.

BARRED WORDS AND PHRASES. Female, lady (say woman generally), Britisher (Briton), deceased, conflagration, deposed, numerous and costly, paid tribute to, discoursed sweet music, prior to (before), lengthy (long), white mantle (snow), cold collation, pukka, mere man, fair sex, festive season.

OVERWORKED WORDS. Thrilling, tragic, sad, dramatic, amazing, sensational, pretty. One book says: "If a story is tragic or sensational and is well told there is no need to tell readers of its qualities; they can find them. If Genesis began 'The amazingly dramatic story of how God made the world in the remarkably short time of six days. . . .' But it doesn't."

Delane was ruthless in his corrections on points of style as well as substance. "I have heard," says Kinglake, "that when dealing with proofs he disclosed a severe taste, striking out a great deal of ornament . . . he fostered a disposition to write in sterling, unadorned English." He expected his staff to write in "good, simple English, capable of being translated into Latin prose, without slang and without technicality." Even in the rush of the small hours he would insist on correcting inaccurate or slovenly expressions. Dean Wace says: "I remember his being particularly indignant with the use of the slipshod phrase that a marriage, or a funeral, or a race, had 'taken place.' It was mere slovenliness of expression, he said, instead of saying that a marriage had been solemnized or a race run."

### *Use of Reference Books*

While there are some queries that must be referred by the sub-editor to the office library or intelligence department for answer, nearly every story that is handled contains points that have to be looked up in the reference books kept for speedy use in the room. A knowledge of the resources of these books and a facility for quick reference are important. Some of these books are in constant demand. "Whitaker's Almanack" is a mine of useful fact; it gives all the usual Parliamentary, political, administrative, and social data and answers such questions as "Is he a V.C.?", "What is the longest railway tunnel?", "What were the wheat imports last

year?", "Who is the Lord-Lieutenant of such and such a county?", and many others which arise in work at the desk. "Whitaker's Peerage" is a useful book and should be kept up to date by entering honours as bestowed during the year; while Burke and Debrett are needed for lineage and collaterals. Ruvigny and Gotha cover the social ranks abroad.

"Who's Who" is, of course, the best guide to living persons and the "Dictionary of National Biography" to the famous dead. Often the question arises "Is he dead?", and it is difficult sometimes to answer. "Who was Who" is useful here. Burke's "Landed Gentry," Kelly's "Book of Titled People" are good. For Imperial and foreign information of all kinds the "Statesmen's Year Book," and the official lists of the Foreign, India, and Colonial offices are needed. Music, the stage, and the film have their own books of biographical reference. Gazetteers and maps of many kinds are used, and it is worth while being able to plot out positions at sea by latitude and longitude, to locate a wreck. Some offices have a staff of special draughtsmen working in the "map room."

The "Telephone Directory" is useful for names, and "Crockford's Directory," essential for things ecclesiastical, furnishes a good gazetteer in its alphabetical list of parishes. For quick reference in Parliamentary affairs there are Vacher and Dod, with "Hansard" for exact passages from speeches, while election figures are readily found in the "Constitutional Year Book."



A little work called the "Red Poll Book" gives the results of all the Parliamentary elections back to 1832.

The Church of England has its Year Book and also other churches of importance; and the universities have their calendars, full of valuable data. They will decide whether a man is entitled to be called a professor or not. The "Universities Year Book" covers all the universities of the Empire. The "Municipal Year Book" gives details of the county, borough, urban, and rural councils; the Law List shows all the K.C.'s, counsel, solicitors, judges, recorders, stipendiary magistrates, and coroners; and other essential books include the "Medical Directory," the "Stock Exchange Year Book," the "Directory of Directors," the Army, Navy, and Royal Air Force Lists, and Lloyd's Registers of shipping (for tonnages, owners and ports of registry). For Ireland the directory is Thom's, and for Scotland "Oliver and Boyd's Edinburgh Almanac." The index volume of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" is valuable on a broad scale, and then there are, of course, the English and other dictionaries, concordances of the Bible and literature, Grove's "Dictionary of Music" and many other cyclopædias, books of quotations, and year books, not forgetting Haydn's "Dictionary of Dates." This is a very cursory glance at a whole library of specialized books, which experience alone will teach how to handle. A very learned man once defined a learned man as he who knows where to find things. This aspect of learning has a specific application to sub-editors.

*The Art Department*

Pictorial journalism is a subject that would require a whole book to itself for those who intend to make a serious study of it. For the general sub-editor a knowledge of its broad essentials is necessary. On large staffs there is, of course, an art editor with his own photographers and sub-editors or caption writers. This department of the editorial staff has a special technique of its own. On the smaller papers the news sub-editor will be called upon to handle picture work—that is to select photographs from those submitted by agencies, free-lances, and amateurs, to write the captions and plan the make-up. “Newsy” pictures, action as opposed to still life, and the unusual angle, are the chief merits sought, together with bold contrast of light and shade for effective printing. The “screen,” coarse, medium, or fine, is chosen according to the quality of the printing paper and the nature of the subject.

The half-tone process which made the pace for the enormous extension of newspaper illustration is based on the device of the screen, a glass plate with minute diagonal rulings which, placed between the negative and the object, breaks up the picture into innumerable dots. It is the grouping of these dots in varying degrees of density that gives the gradations of tone which were impossible in the old line blocks, composed of black and white only. The line block survives for cartoons and comic strips, and is having some revival in news sketches. It

gives an individual touch which some prefer to the purely photo-mechanical process. A growing method of illustration, of high artistic possibilities, is photogravure, or the intaglio process. In America it is often called roto-gravure, and the use of this method of printing on rotary machines for newspaper illustration is being actively exploited, but the difficulty is mainly that of speed. Those who desire to master the whole subject of pictorial work should study one of the textbooks which are devoted to it.

## CHAPTER IV

### *ELEMENTS OF TYPOGRAPHY*

TYPOGRAPHY, and the mechanical departments of newspaper production, are subjects of great interest to the journalist. For the sub-editor who aims at the attainment of an executive position they are of practical and essential importance. The literary and news-handling side of the work comes first in order of time, and is the supreme matter in sub-editing, pure and simple, but the technical requirements constantly compel attention, and the efficient performance of sub-editing demands a good deal of practical knowledge of type and machines. The craft of the printer has profound historical interest, and its artistic possibilities have a strong appeal; while the origin and developments of the printing press, of mechanical composition, and of the processes of illustration, naturally come within the purview of the journalist. A well-equipped sub-editor should, in short, have a good working knowledge of the whole train of operations by which news is gathered, prepared, printed, and delivered to the reader. In this chapter I propose to deal briefly with typography.

It may be recalled that Sherlock Holmes regarded knowledge of types as an elementary qualification of the crime expert, though he admitted that when he was young he confused

the type of the *Leeds Mercury* with that of the *Western Morning News*. How many journalists would be able to distinguish them? Holmes in one place pays a tribute that is worth quoting—

There is as much difference to my eyes between the leaded bourgeois type of a *Times* article and the slovenly print of an evening halfpenny paper as there could be between your negro and your Eskimo . . . a *Times* leader is entirely distinctive.

When *The Times* adopted the newer forms of machine composition the greatest care was taken to preserve the quality and character of the old founts of type. It should be mentioned that *The Times* has always been a pioneer in mechanical progress, and long before the monotype and the linotype were invented there was a type-setting machine in use in Printing House Square, known as the Kastenbein, which was capable of setting 298 lines in an hour.

H. V. Morton, the brilliant special writer who has adorned the pages of the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Herald*, makes some penetrating comments on technique and training—

Journalists (he says) should first win their spurs in the reporting room, the basis of all good journalism. They should start in the provinces, interviewing the local Mayor, reporting local fires, police courts, county courts, bazaars, and church functions, getting an all-round training. And it is only in the provincial office that a member of the editorial staff acquires an adequate knowledge of the technical side of newspaper production.

It is astonishing how few journalists to-day know the technique of newspaper production. When I started in the provinces I never went home till I'd got a copy of the issue off the press. Even if I had nothing to do I hung round watching the compositors and machines, learning how it was all done . . . Sub-editing kills writing. By 1914, after a year of sub-editing, I couldn't write a line. Fortunately the War gave me a way of escape, and I gradually got back to writing, though I didn't forget my technique.

This is good common-sense advice, although to say that sub-editing "kills writing," without qualification, seems to me an exaggeration.

### *Mind and Mechanism*

Among the papers still in my file is the centenary number of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which is an altogether worthy product of a great newspaper. It contains a page headed "Producing a Newspaper; stages from copy to the printed sheet." Having described how the world is "combed for news," the story, under the pregnant crosshead "Merging Mind and Mechanism," proceeds—

This fleeting glimpse of how the news is gathered leads us to consider how it is transmitted into metal, printed and delivered to close upon a quarter of a million homes, all in the space of a few hours. First the news passes the rigorous scrutiny of the sub-editor. He and his assistants must read every line, weigh carefully its news value, be sensitive to lurking libels, determine what space can be given each item, what headings it should carry to epitomize its most striking features, and what type it should be set in.

This is an excellent summary of the function of the sub-editor; I quote it here because it brings out the task of the men who have to cast the mental product into the mechanical mould. To do so efficiently requires knowledge of the processes of the composing and machining departments.

In the daily routine the sub-editor comes into frequent contact with readers and printers and the picture department—most closely with the printer. The "comp," as he is generally known, is usually an excellent fellow, who takes pride

in his craft and is often a born wit. Some so-called "printer's errors" are so funny and so apposite that they must have occurred by design and not by chance. I resist the temptation to give some classic examples, and keep to my more prosaic theme. Printers welcome the co-operation of the sub-editor and respond usually to the desire to acquire the practical touch, though possibly the "littery gent," who in his keenness handles a brass or a piece of type, may be playfully asked to produce his union card.

### *Point System*

The old names by which types of various sizes were known, such as minion, brevier, and bourgeois, are rapidly becoming obsolete. The point system, originated in America, is now widely used in this country. For instance, in many offices it is now the rule to mark copy "7-point" and "8-point" instead of "min." and "brev.," though others continue to use the old familiar names. The success of the point system of measurement was inevitable, because of the variations in sizes of types made by the different founders, which caused all sorts of difficulties in adjustment. For instance, a long primer from one case might vary, perhaps ever so little, from the long primer of another case, but that fractional difference would produce difficulty in alignment. So the necessity for standardization in type was recognized, and the basis was found in the "point," of which there are 72 to the inch. Pica is a sort of standard and

equals 12 points, six picas going to the inch. This measurement applies to the face of the types as shown in printing, i.e. the letter as seen in print *plus* the white space above and below it, which represents the body of the "stamp" or piece of type. If you examine a "stamp" you will see that below the face of the letter which prints is the "beard" which projects a little beyond the letter. This, being sunk below the face of the letter, does not print, but gives the "white" between the lines in printing. If this amount of white is not sufficient, it is increased by the insertion of leads or brasses between the lines. Thus, very important news will be double leaded, and particular parts of a story it is desired to throw into relief will also be leaded. In some offices important matter such as leading articles is set in, say, 9-point type on a 10-point body, which means that it looks whiter in print, and the necessity of leading is obviated. To make it quite clear I repeat that the point measure is the thickness of the line as seen in print, including the white above and below the printed letters belonging to the body of that line. In this system all types are cast as multiples of the 1-point unit. The extreme range of sizes used in newspapers is from 5 point (Pearl) to 12 point (Pica), but the latter is only used occasionally, for matters of unusual importance. Broadly speaking, the classification of the uses of types is as follows—

Smallest founts (Pearl, Agate or Ruby, and Nonpareil) for masses of formal copy such



as Stock Exchange dealings, Bourse quotations, broadcasting programmes, and commodity markets.

Minion (and in some offices brevier) for ordinary reports, such as meetings, conferences, Parliament.

Bourgeois or long primer for important news stories, leading articles, and specials of all kinds. A general practice is to set the beginnings of stories in these larger types and then "drop into" minion, as it is termed, to save space. Sometimes in an extended minion report matter quoted textually, such as a long resolution or series of points, is set in a smaller type like nonpareil or ruby. These arrangements depend on the space position and the judgment of the sub-editor.

Specimens of the type founts mostly used, showing the point designations and the old names, follow. The sentences are taken from a little essay by C. E. Montague on the joys of journalism—

#### **5½-point (Ruby)**

With word of what earth-shaking event would the chief sub-editor come at the witching hour into his little still room, slung up above the sleeping city that they were to set all a-buzz at daylight with the news? You might suppose the thrill of hearing things a few hours sooner than your fellows would soon pass away. Some of us never find it has passed.

#### **6-point (Nonpareil)**

With word of what earth-shaking event would the chief sub-editor come at the witching hour into his little still room, slung up above the sleeping city that they were to set all a-buzz at daylight with the news? You might suppose the thrill of hearing things a few hours sooner than your fellows would

#### **7-point (Minion)**

With word of what earth-shaking event would the chief sub-editor come at the witching hour into his little still room, slung up above the sleeping city that they were to set all a-buzz at daylight with the news? You might suppose the thrill of hearing things a few hours

**8-point (Brevier)**

With word of what earth-shaking event would the chief sub-editor come at the witching hour into his little still room, slung up above the sleeping city that they were to set all a-buzz at daylight with the news? You might suppose the thrill of hearing

**9-point (Bourgeois)**

With word of what earth-shaking event would the chief sub-editor come at the witching hour into his little still room, slung up above the sleeping city that they were to set all a-buzz at daylight with the news? You might suppose

**10-point (Long Primer)**

With word of what earth-shaking event would the chief sub-editor come at the witching hour into his little still room, slung up above the sleeping city that they were to set all a-buzz at daylight with the news? You

**11-point (Small Pica)**

With word of what earth-shaking event would the chief sub-editor come at the witching hour into his little still room, slung up above the sleeping city that they were to set all a-buzz at daylight with the

**12-point (Pica)**

With word of what earth-shaking event would the chief sub-editor come at the witching hour into his little still room, slung up above the sleeping city that they were to set all a-

Pearl (5-point) is not included in the series, because it is too small for general use. There are even smaller types in existence, namely, Excelsior (3-point), Minikin (3-point), Brilliant (4-point), and Diamond ( $4\frac{1}{2}$ -point). An intermediate between Nonpareil and Minion is Emerald ( $6\frac{1}{2}$ -point) which is known as Minionette in

America, where 5½-point (shown here as Ruby) is known as Agate.

There is a broad distinction in type faces indicated by the terms "modern" and "old style." This book is set in old style; the extracts printed above are in modern, except the first one (in 5½-point, i.e. Ruby). Nearly all newspapers use the modern (the *Morning Post* is one of the few that are set in an old-style face); books are set in both. The choice is a matter of taste. Close examination of the two styles will show that in the old-style, or old-face, the serifs, or little flourishes, are more pronounced than in the modern, which is plainer and more severe. Types that have no flourishes at all are of the sans-serif group, spoken of as plain sans among printers. These sorts of black type are often used in the display of newspaper stories. In recent years a great deal of research has been going on with the object of discovering the most legible types for newspaper use, and it is a matter of practical importance to the reading public. When the *Daily Mirror* introduced a new type it flooded the country with the poster "Ionic to-day." Some casual observers of this bill were led to wonder whether it was a racing tip, or the name of a strange god that had got into the news.

### *Proof Reading*

Proof reading is often done by juniors in the smaller offices, but is, of course, the work of a special department in the larger offices. Here, however, the sub-editor often has to handle

proofs for various purposes, and a knowledge of the correct system of marking is necessary. I have had a short leader from *The Times* set with a large number of mistakes in it (of course no such "dirty" proof would come up in ordinary work) and it is presented overleaf with the reader's marks, and side by side with it is the corrected matter. A comparison of the two—the first proof and the final revise—will show how all the usual "printer's errors" are dealt with. The chief marks may be briefly explained—

"Centre" means that the spacing on either side of the title must be equalized.

The correction on the right of the title means that it has to be reset in 10 point Old Face Heavy type, upper and lower case—i.e. initial letters in "upper," or capitals, and the rest in lower case.

A, with the treble line underneath, indicates that "academy" must have a capital.

The sign next to the A in the left margin means that a space has to be inserted between "the" and "first."

A wrong letter like "a" in "existence" is crossed through and the correct letter written in margin as e/. The reader always puts a stroke after his correction in the margin.

The sign for a turned letter appears against the fifth line for the turned "w."

S.C. indicates small caps wanted.

Missing letters are indicated by a carat at the appropriate place and the right letter, or quotation marks, or whatever it may be, in the margin, as here in the word "generation."

# HOW TO CORRECT A PROOF

centre/  
A/#/

## A JOURNALIST HONORED

10 pt. o. f. heavy  
u. s. l. s.

The French academy has for the first time in its long existence admitted to the highest literary honour in France a journalist who has never been anything but a journalist, who has never written a book, or entered Parliament, or composed poetry, but who has now been welcomed by the Director of that august assembly as "one of the best writers of the present generation." Journalists have been elected Academicians before—such as Mm. LEMOINNE and HERVÉ, who were primarily journalists and incidentally followed other occupations; or M. CLEMENCEAU—whose place the new member is taking—who was at one time a famous journalist and later a still more famous statesman.

S.C.

run on/

cap./é/

But M. CHAUMEIX has won the honour solely by his writings for a single newspaper. As its chief leader-writer he has contributed to the journal des Débats for thirty years articles of exquisite quality on politics, philosophy, and literature. Working under the pressure of daily publication, he has known what it is to finish on the stroke of time words which all the world will be at liberty to criticize on the morrow, and which for him—unlike the writers of mere books—there is no chance of revising or recasting. HORACE's prudent precept saepe solum veritas is not advice that he can follow. He must write quickly; and what he has written may never be retraced or recalled.

rom/  
ital/

2/  
3/  
ital/

q/zi/  
a/f/

sq.#/  
l/

s.c./ei/  
i/0/

centre/

Yet in these circumstances M. CHAUMEIX has produced work which has received the authoritative hall mark of literature. And indeed the difference between literature and Journalism is not one of style but of circumstance, not of class but of purpose. Daily papers have another scope and reason than books. Their articles bear a direct relation to the events of the hour. They are or should be flash-lights of literature turned upon contemporary history. They illumine and disappear. They throw only transient beams of enlightenment or instruction; but in the aggregate they may influence the thoughts and the actions of a generation. M. Chaumeix has deserved well of his profession; and the Académie Française has once more shown that it is not so inflexible and conventional as some of its critics proclaim.

=/off

b.c./off/  
#/

re-set in  
6' geo.

ε/η/

A leader from "The Times"

7/12/07

# TYPE AFTER CORRECTION

## A Journalist Honoured

The French Academy has for the first time in its long existence admitted to the highest literary honour in France a journalist who has never been anything but a journalist, who has never written a book, or entered Parliament, or composed poetry, but who has now been welcomed by the DIRECTOR of that august assembly as "one of the best writers of the present generation." Journalists have been elected Academicians before—such as MM. LEMOINNE and HERVÉ, who were primarily journalists and incidentally followed other occupations; or M. CLEMENCEAU—whose place the new member is taking—who was at one time a famous journalist and later a still more famous statesman. But M. CHAUMEIX has won the honour solely by his writings for a single newspaper. As its chief leader-writer he has contributed to the *Journal des Débats* for thirty years articles of exquisite quality on politics, philosophy, and literature. Working under the pressure of daily publication, he has known what it is to finish on the stroke of time words which all the world will be at liberty to criticize on the morrow, and which for him—unlike the writers of mere books—there is no chance of revising or recasting. HORACE's prudent precept *saepe stilum veritas* is not advice that he can follow. He must write quickly; and what he has written may never be retraced or recalled.

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A leader from *The Times*.

"CLEAN" PROOF AFTER CORRECTION

“Rom” means that the word “Academicians” has been wrongly set in italics and must be set in roman type. The same mark lower down shows that “H” in “Horace” is incorrectly an italic instead of a roman capital letter. Then the three Latin words should properly be in italic and not roman, and are so marked.

“Run on” means that there must be no new paragraph or “break” and the setting must be made to continue.

In the last line of the second paragraph a space is redundant in “re traced” and the close-up mark appears on the right.

There is too much “white” between the second and third paragraphs, and the two marks grouped on the right mean delete space.

The whole of the last paragraph has been wrongly set in 7-point (min.) instead of 9-point (bourgeois), hence the mark down the whole of the right side with the instruction “reset in b’ges,” the reader using the old name of the type and not the point designation. This is a matter of office usage.

Against line three of the last paragraph is the mark “ff,” meaning that in the word “difference” the two f’s are separate letters and should be the double ff, which is cast in one piece of type.

In line seven of the last paragraph the compositor has not equalized his spacing, and the mark “eq.” on the left corrects this.

In line eight of the last paragraph two “metal rules” have been omitted.

In the last line of the paragraph the letter “i”

is marked into "critics" and the full point after "proclaim."

The bottom line of all is out of centre like the caption at the top, and the name of the paper is in roman instead of italics.

Column widths are measured in ems; the em is the square of the letter M. Usually it is the pica em that is meant, as pica is a standard. Thus the news columns of *The Times* are 14 ems wide, and the leader page columns 16 ems—spoken of thus the em means pica. The en is half the em and is the unit employed in measuring type for charging up piece-work in composition. For this purpose matter is calculated by the 1,000 ens. •

### *Estimating Length*

It is necessary for the sub-editor to know the type capacity of his columns. A minion column may contain 200 lines and average seven words to the line, giving a total of 1,400 words to the column. Copy can be estimated by averaging the words to the line and the lines to the folio, and a fairly exact computation made of what it will make in type, due allowance being made for headlines, cross heads, and leads. By constant practice it is possible to make quick and accurate estimates, and this accomplishment is invaluable in sub-editing. In most offices copy is measured by the column and its fractions—one-half, one-third, one-quarter, or one-eighth. Where old fashions still prevail, quantities are measured by the hand compositor's "stick." Composition by linotype and other machines



has rendered this largely obsolete. In *The Times* office the column is divided into 32, and this assists close and careful estimating. One 32nd contains seven lines of minion, and, at an average of eight words per line, fifty-six words. Half a column is called, precisely, 16/32nds, and so on. The spaces taken by the various standard size headings are spoken of in the same way.

Heading charts are provided in properly organized offices. The range of headings in general use, from the "splash" down to the small single-liners that fill up the bottoms of columns, is shown, with the names of the types and the maximum number of units per line. The line total of units includes the spaces. Regard must be paid to the proportions of thick and thin letters in the words of the heading. The totals of units on the heading charts are based on averages, and judgment is needed to gauge possibilities. For instance, in this line—

#### MAXIMUM NUMBER

the unit total is 14, and owing to the unusual quantity of M's it would be a tight squeeze, if not an impossibility, to get it into a regulation 14-unit line. But if the desired line were

#### AN IRISH CRISIS

it would come in easily, although there are 15 units. These include four I's and three S's, which are much thinner letters.

Making the heading fit is one of the ever-present, and often difficult, tasks of the sub-editor, and skill is attained only by experience.

The most brilliant ideas in word forms are subject to the rigid limitations of type, and often the copy of a cleverly worded line comes back from the printer with the disheartening disclosure that "it won't come in." Then the task is to find the synonym that will. When a piece of copy is assigned a certain heading that carries a general rule as to length. Ordinary headings are known as A, B, C, D, E, and so on. The bigger heads cover stories that are necessarily elastic as to space, but the smaller heads import a maximum length. Heading styles, of course, vary, but there is a general rule as to the balance of single and turning lines. Observation of one's paper is the sure guide.

### *How to Prepare Copy*

Some concise rules for the preparation of copy may be given, although they are applicable equally to reporters and sub-editors. Copy is received not only from staff reporters who observe the style of the paper, but also from agencies and contributors of all sorts, and their work has to be marked to bring it to the standard.

Reporters should use the typewriter whenever possible.

Never write single-spaced copy. Double or triple spacing gives room for clear interlineation. A jumble of closely written lines is very difficult to handle.

Always put your name in a top corner of the first folio.

Leave a good margin on the left, and allow

a good space at the top of the first folio for headlines or slug lines or instructions to printer.

Of course, write on one side of the paper only.

Never write vertically in the margin.

The copy cutter (i.e. the man in the composing room who slices up the folios into short "takes" for setting) is seriously handicapped by marginal up-and-down writing.

Indent deeply for paragraphs.

Do not divide a word from one page to another, or from one line to another. It is advisable to complete a paragraph at the bottom of a folio when only a few words remain and start the next folio with the fresh paragraph. This is specially useful when "rush" copy is being sub-edited page by page as it comes from the writer.

Names and figures should be written with special care. If a correction is required, cross out the wrong word or figures and substitute the correct ones complete.

If words are purposely spelt wrongly put the note "follow copy" in a circle in the margin, for the printer's guidance.

Never put two distinct stories on the same folio.

When a story is complete put a mark at the end to show that it is finished.

Acquaint yourself thoroughly with your office rules as to abbreviations, the use of capitals, italics, quotation marks, words for figures (usually words are employed for figures under 10), compound words, titles (i.e. Rev. or the Rev., etc.), punctuation (close or open), and





the spelling forms prescribed where there are alternatives.

The basis of these rules is chiefly typographical, and it is well to understand in a practical way the reasons for them. Therefore, a knowledge of typography is valuable and facilitates the preparation of copy. The sub-editor is the intermediary between the copy writer and the make-up editor and printer, and to discharge his duties efficiently he should have real knowledge and understanding of the work of all three.

### *A Sample Story*

We will now look in some detail at the actual preparation of stories, taking first a straightforward example (Plates IV and V). The custom of *The Times* and some other papers in dealing with long and important official papers like this is to give the main portions at adequate length on an "away" page, and to print a descriptive summary on the main news page with a cross reference to the fuller story elsewhere. Not so many years ago a story like this would have appeared under a diminutive single head, all in the same small type and with no cross-heads to relieve the mass. A vivid example of the altered style of display was afforded by the earthquake shock of 1931. When the last event of similar severity occurred in 1884, two or three columns of solid minion appeared in *The Times* with one single heading smaller than any heading shown in Plate IV. The shock of the summer of 1931, however,

was treated with the biggest "four-decker" headings, large type, and bold sectional headings.

The style of display in Plate IV is sober but adequate. The main heading is well balanced, with two turning lines and one single. The introductory paragraph is set in bourgeois, 9-point, leaded, and the main conclusion of the report is given an indented paragraph to emphasize it. The indent is "2 and 1," that is, the first line 2 ems and the rest 1 em. When the textual quotation from the report begins it is in minion, 7-point. The ordinary cross-heads are 9-point caps. As the story is a long one, nearly four columns, some double cross-heads in bolder type are 'used to "break it up," and prevent monotony in appearance. The double cross-heads "fall right"; that is to say, they do not come side by side in the adjoining columns, but in positions which give symmetry and balance to the *ensemble*. To get these double cross-heads in the right positions involves an accurate estimate of the length of the copy by the sub-editor. He must so gauge the copy that he can place the first, "Ship's Final Movements," far enough down the second column to stand clear of the main head and introduction. The second is put where it is to avoid clashing with those in columns two and four. The ordinary cross-heads in caps are placed at suitable intervals. For appearance, the one "Effect of Gusts" in column three is too near the top and might well have been removed in making-up. The double headings do not carry any rules, being cross-heads only. In







column three the table is set in ruby,  $5\frac{1}{2}$ -point. The little paragraph right at the end, about the inquest, not being part of the official report, is given "after rule"—a 3-em rule.

Plate V shows the main page summary of the report and is set entirely in 9-point. The three introductory paragraphs give briefly the requisite historical setting to the report and are indented "full out and 1," i.e. first line full out to the column rule, and rest of paragraph 1-em indent. The main heading is varied from the "away" head, both in wording and in balance, being one single and two turning. Being on the main page, the cross-heads are in black type (9-point titling). The style of display is "conservative," but the importance of the story and its main points are adequately treated.

### *Getting Emphasis*

Next I will deal with the typographical methods employed for securing emphasis.

PARAGRAPHING is, of course, one of the oldest, though in some ancient prints I have seen the "pars." run to half a column and more. To-day the tendency is towards shorter paragraphs, and in some of the "snappiest" papers one finds a paragraph for every sentence. In the more solid papers, however, paragraphs of more than about 20 to 25 lines are not liked. Care is needed in selecting the places for new paragraphs; they should be where new points, new ideas, and new subjects begin.

INDENTATION is very widely used, in varied forms, to direct the reader's attention to

important passages in stories and reports. Black types and italics serve the same purpose, even more effectively, but care must be taken not to destroy their value by over-use. The markings for indents are simple when once the system of type measurement is understood.

**BLACK TYPE** possibilities, of course, depend upon the resources of the office. The family of these types is a numerous and increasing one. Those that are most frequently seen in use in papers that adopt bold display are as follows: Clarendon, Jenson, De Vinne, the extensive Latin series, Old Face and Old-face Heavy, Cheltenham (a favourite), Doric, Gothic, Bodoni, Century and Cloister. The sub-editor soon discovers the kinds available in his office. Some blacks are better for tables and figures than others, and some match the "body founts" best.

**INTRODUCTIONS.** With a big story, bold introductions are used, giving the main points and the latest news. Thus it happens that the introduction and the main heads are the last to be written. For introductions the sentences must be short and sharp, giving the maximum of fact in the minimum of phrase. Vital points are sometimes enclosed in black type in a "box," i.e. a complete border of rules inside the column rules (see bottom of columns 1 and 2, Plate VIII); another style is the "cut-off," i.e. rules at the top and bottom of the matter extending right to the column rules (see Plate IX, columns 2 and 3 just under the picture of the ex-Kaiser).

**CROSS-HEADS.** The correct placing of cross-heads is important. A rule in one office is that





every cross-head must contain a fact ; this effectually kills vague and "woolly" lines. The line may be centred, or full out to the left ; it may be in ordinary capitals or in black type (roman or italic) and underlined with a thick rule. On the stone much may be done to display a story well by leading a few lines under each cross-head. In some offices the use of the two-line or drop letter for the opening of all big stories is compulsory.

The permutations of type and rule are almost endless. The completely "modern" sub-editor and make-up man revel in novelties, and to hold one's own in this competitive business demands bright and original ideas, backed by wide technical knowledge.

### *Old and New Styles*

Some later styles of display are illustrated in Plates VI, VIII, and IX, and Plate VII gives the main news page of the first issue of the *Daily Mail*, dated 4th May, 1896. A comparison of this with the other three plates shows clearly the revolution that has taken place in typographical display. Plate VIII shows practically the whole of a main page devoted to one dominating news story, and displayed with a great variety of typographical and make-up devices.

The most striking characteristics of the 1896 *Mail* page are that all the headings are single column ; all the type is a plain body fount, varying very slightly in size and balance ; there are no indentations and no black type passages. Condensed titlings were much in vogue then for

headlines, and incidentally they made the work of the sub-editor easier in getting unwieldy words in. One of the compensations of the modern style is that the double column headings now in fashion give a greater scope in width, which more than makes up for the smaller number of units allowed by the bolder types.

In the news pages of to-day the dominating feature is the heading extending right across the top, known variously as the banner, streamer, or ribbon. The three sample pages here shown have each a banner set in roman, as it happens, but very often bold italics are used and are very effective. Sizes vary usually from 24- to 36-point, but with really startling news a banner on a larger scale will be introduced, as in Plate VIII, where an exceptionally big top line is necessitated by the bold typographical scheme of the whole page. In Plates VI and IX the regulation sizes appear. Note that the "splash" story that carries the banner follows on to it with only a short rule between. The other columns with different stories are cut off from the banner by plain rule. Thus the banner is the top line of the "splash" and the next line is a continuing one, following naturally as a subsidiary.

So many varieties of black and other type, of indents and cross-heads, are employed that the advantage of widely-spaced copy is obvious because of the room it affords for the detailed instructions to the printer that have to be written by the sub-editor. Fortunately, the headings are standardized, and the number in





There are no  
peppermints to  
equal  
**FOXES  
GLACIER  
MINTS**

# Daily Herald

4 a.m.  
EDITION

**LATEST**  
**ZIG-ZAG**  
CIGARETTE PAPERS

## BATTLE TO SAVE FIFTY LIVES EACH DAY

**"Fit as a Fiddle"**  
**MR. SNOWDEN**  
**BACK FULL**  
**OF FIGHT**  
**READY TO LUNGE**  
**BEHIND BUDGET**  
**NEW WAR**  
**LAND TAXES TUSSELE**



Mr. Snowden has remained in London in full vigour, full of fight to conduct the greatest Budget battle since the war.

**Safety-First Army**  
**Of 500,000 To**  
**Be Mobilised**  
**THREE THOUSAND HURT**  
**BY ACCIDENTS DAILY**  
**Churches, Schools and Cinemas**  
**Join in Campaign**

EVERY day throughout the year 50 people are killed and 3,000 injured by accidents in Great Britain. Every half hour somebody dies or is hurt.



**GIRL POLICE DECOY IN**  
**"43" CLUB**  
**RAID**  
**MRS. MEYRICK**  
**PRESENT**  
**64 NAMES TAKEN**

**CUP FINAL**  
**INVASION OF**  
**LONDON**  
**100,000 TRIPPERS**  
**BOUND FOR THE**  
**STADIUM**  
**DAWN SCENES**

**Mystery Illness**  
**of Ex-Kaiser**  
**"Must Keep to Bed**  
**for Two Weeks"**



From the Daily Telegraph (London) 1/4 (MUNICH) (Associated Press) — The Kaiser's illness is a mystery. It is said that he is suffering from a severe form of influenza.

**Police Rescue Midnight**  
**Motorist from Serpentine**



A motorist who had been in the Serpentine for some time was rescued by the police. The motorist was found unconscious and was taken to the hospital.

## SECRETS OF A FAMOUS SPY



Who is she? The story of a famous spy who has been in the service of the British Government for many years.

**ALFONSO VISITS THE**  
**KING**  
**THURSDAY AFTERNOON**  
**TO VISIT THE**  
**QUEEN**

Alfonso XIII is expected to visit the King and Queen on Thursday afternoon. The visit is expected to be a friendly one.

**DRINA, BEARS WITH**  
**THE**  
**WIND**

The Drina river is expected to be in a state of flood due to the heavy rain. The water level is expected to rise significantly.

**MR. CLYNE SAYS**  
**NO**  
**REFUSE OFFER OF 100,000**  
**AMERICAN TROOPS**

Mr. Clyne has refused the offer of 100,000 American troops. He has said that the British Government does not need them.

## The People

**10-MORROW**  
**£4000**  
**IN CASE MUST BE WON**

use for these elaborate pages is large. Bold italics give variety and emphasis; for instance, in Plate VI the heading in column 6 "Late Earl Russell's £10,000" is a striking innovation in the *Daily Mail* which has quite a spectacular effect, due both to the type itself and to the white spaces of the unusual indentations. The report of Dean Inge's speech (columns 1 and 2, Plate VI) shows how indents and black types are used to bring out important passages. In the story in columns 4 and 5, next in importance to the "splash," striking cross-heads are set in clear thick italic, underlined with heavy rules. The pictures at the tops of columns 3 and 6 are cut off with double thin rules, and, as the picture of Texas belongs to her story in column 7, there is no rule between it and the adjoining heading, the column rule being shortened for the purpose.

The "box" is a favourite device in most papers for displaying important announcements and brief and piquant pieces of news. There is one at the bottom of column 2 in Plate VI; and in Plate VIII there are two, in columns 1 and 2. Generally the "box" is made of a double rule completely enclosing the matter within the column rules, but sometimes single rule is used. Mitred rule is used to get the corners exact; where this is not used the rules often fail to join properly at the angles, and a loose untidy appearance results.

Plate VIII is a good example of variety in type. An office must have a well-furnished case room to execute a scheme of headings and make-up so unusual as this. A sub-editor experienced

enough to work on a story so important and intricate as this will be well informed as to the resources of his printer. In column 6, with the picture of Alfonso, is used a distinctive type to throw up the final message. It belongs to an artistic family of types which includes Canterbury Text, Guildford Text, Cloister Black, Tudor Black, Caxtonian Black, and Old English.

## CHAPTER V

### *THE ART OF THE HEADLINE*

THE character and class of a newspaper are plainly shown by its headlines, ranging "from grave to gay, from lively to severe." There are many gradations in style, from bright to dull, from sensational to dignified. The sub-editor has to produce headings of the nature and quality demanded, and it is often the most difficult and anxious part of his work. A story may take 10 minutes to revise and prepare, and its headlines may take just as long to write, but if the effort is a good one no complaint of wasted time will be heard.

A heading should bring out clearly the main theme of a story and reflect the "tone" of it, be it serious or light. The caption should "sit" naturally on the matter and not give an effect of strain or exaggeration; neither should it fail to rise to the full opportunity afforded by the contents of the story. Opinions will differ very often as to what is the best point. One will seize upon a certain feature as being of the greatest "human interest," although not the main *motif*, and devote the heading to it—hence, what some regard as "freak" headings, exploiting a sensational, spicy, or funny point that is not at all essential to the main purpose of the story. As an instance I recall a report

of the great Whit Monday procession of Lancashire Sunday School children. This event dominated Manchester for the day, and ordinary traffic was suspended. The report started off: "365 women fainted while watching the procession in Manchester yesterday . . ." The heading was—

## **365 WOMEN FAINT**

### **WHILE WATCHING PROCESSION**

### **MARCH OF 20,000 CHILDREN**

Whether the fainting women were the "real news" or not is a matter for discussion.

The aim should be to get into the headings the points of greatest interest, judged by the paper's standard of news. Too often a good story is spoiled by dull uninspired headings. Newspapers differ greatly in the amount of liberty allowed in headings, but the general tendency is towards increasing brightness and originality. In some cases, happily few, liberty is permitted to degenerate into licence.

Contrasted methods of treating the same story are well shown by the extracts given below—one from a "class" and the other from a "popular" paper.

# THE ART OF THE HEADLINE 121

## THE LAST TATTOO.

### RAIN, MUD, AND CHEERFULNESS

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

Heavens! How it rained! It was raining at Waterloo when the much advertised, and, let it be said, most comfortable dinner and supper Tattoo train started, and it rained the whole way down to Aldershot—spasmodic showers to Surbiton, torrents at Woking, and a steady downpour to greet us at our journey's end.

## 70,000 CROWD DRENCHED

---

## LOCOMOTIVES AS CLOTHES HORSES

## HOW WOMEN DRIED THEMSELVES

**From OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

ALDERSHOT, Sunday.

The King and Queen saw an example of crowd heroism last night when 70,000 people sat or stood through a torrential downpour of rain to watch the close of the Aldershot torchlight tattoo.

Not one person in ten had brought an umbrella and the majority of the men had no overcoats. Yet the spectators,

This is a case of "twopence plain and a penny coloured."

So, too, is the following—

**AERODROME FOR EVERY  
TOWN**

SIR ALAN COBHAM'S PLEA

---

**THE ONLY  
WOMAN**

**CIGARETTE AT A  
BANQUET**

---

**“WORSHIPFUL  
MADAM”**

Who would think that the second of these headings covered the report of a dinner given in connection with a conference for promoting the establishment of municipal airports? No doubt the sub-editorial artist who wrote it would regard as hopelessly humdrum the plain news heading (shown above it) in another paper on the same event. Of course, the story was moulded to fit the “freak” heading, but it had to contain a statement of the real purpose of the dinner, which, it is needless to say, was not to feature “the only woman.”

Different traditions, the tastes and standards of two distinct classes of readers, and varying types of journalism, account for the wide diversity of headings.

*Getting the Point*

The pages illustrated in this book afford an interesting study in styles. One of the most striking lines I have noticed was that in the *Daily Mail*, over a piece of publicity about its circulation: "10,000,000 pairs of eyes." An example from the same source shows how a central point is brought out and delivered, as it were, "with a punch." The story was about Yeovil as an almost horseless town—

LOOK, THERE'S A HORSE!

TOWN THAT HAS ONLY  
A FEW LEFT

This has the element of challenge and novelty. It is admittedly difficult on local papers to find lively headings for the constant flow of dull routine matter. But "Slocombe Town Council. Interesting subjects discussed," is capable of improvement; something concrete must have been talked about to give headline points. A piece of American advice has application here, and elsewhere: "Tell the story. Get the nub of the yarn in your top. Make it talk. The head is not merely a label; it must say something." Agreed, but there are, of course, many ways of saying it. Mr. J. A. Spender puts on record a prize heading as a masterpiece of summary—

OYSTER BARS JAM QUIZ

He was assured that it would be perfectly well understood in America, but interpretation is



needed over here. The heading conveyed that a Congressman named Oyster opposed an inquiry into an alleged mishandling of a crowd by the police. A more pleasing sample of American "pep" is noted by Mr. G. K. Chesterton—

No journalist will complain of the journalistic necessity of occasionally changing a title, or especially abbreviating a title. If I choose to head an article, "An Inquiry into the Conditions of Mycenaean Civilization in the Heroic Epoch, with Special Reference to the Economic and Domestic Functions of Women Before and After the Conjectural Date of the Argive Expedition against Troy"—if, I say, I choose to give my article some snappy little title like that, I really have no right to complain if (when I send it to *The Chicago Daily Scoop*) they alter the title to "How Helen did the Housekeeping."

An example of overdoing an idea, and of crudeness in a heading, is shown in the following piece of copy which once came my way—

### SMITHFIELD CLUB'S 130TH SHOW

#### "SEX DRAMA" AT ISLINGTON

"Enterprise," the champion steer of Norwich, "Miss Buttercup 3rd," the champion heifer of Birmingham, and the unnamed heifer belonging to Sir George MacPherson Grant, which won the championship of the Scottish National Show at Edinburgh, will meet in open competition in the ring at the Agricultural Hall next Monday, when the Smithfield Club is holding its one hundred and thirtieth annual show. "These three aristocrats of the show ring will be judged in the most cold-blooded and calculated manner," said an official of the Club to a reporter. "It will be useless for one of the ladies to cast a languorous eye at the judges, or display a neatly turned ankle in the hope that her faults—if any—will be overlooked. It seems ungallant to try to rob Miss Buttercup, the pride of Birmingham, or the belle of the Scottish National Show, of the blue ribbon of the show ring, but it is a case of a fair field and no favour, and the dramatic possibilities will be outweighed by the merits of perfect conformation and prime quality."

It is often easy, but is nevertheless meretricious, to seize upon a minor point that is merely incidental to the main theme and base headlines upon it because it is catchy; it is much more difficult, and much sounder journalism, to bring within the narrow compass of a heading the real purpose and significance of the story, and to express it as brightly as possible. The chief sub-editor of a "class" paper, on the staff of which I once worked, was a devotee of brightness, fashioned, of course, by the style of his paper. He tersely expressed his objective in headlines as "dignified devil," which may be taken to mean liveliness without vulgarity, interest and effect that are real and not merely showy.

### *"Label" Headings*

"Label" headings should be avoided. They produce an effect of dullness and monotony. Certain regular news and special features may carry a standard head which is really a "label," such as Parliament, Law, Broadcasting, etc., but under these you will always find the topical line. Most of these labelled sections are placed on "away" pages. On the main news pages a "label" is not permitted; the headings must be instinct with vitality. One or two instances will suffice. The National Museums send out periodically a statement of their acquisitions—rather dry stuff, but sometimes containing a news point. One such list included a portrait of the late Earl Haig at the time of the statue controversy. The merely "label" heading would be—

SUB-EDITING  
NATIONAL PORTRAIT  
GALLERY

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

The topical and more acceptable heading—

A PICTURE OF HAIG

GIFTS TO NATIONAL PORTRAIT  
GALLERY

A better illustration of the difference is the following—

(1)

EMPIRE CANCER  
CAMPAIGN

PROGRESS IN PAST YEAR

NEED OF FUNDS

(2)

**NEW SERUM FOR  
CANCER**

**Empire Campaign  
Developments**

---

**GETTING NEARER A  
CURE**

No explanation is needed of the essential difference between the two. No. 1 is casual and uninformative, leaving the reader to discover the gist of the story; No. 2 sets out the points that are of wide interest and is a real inducement to read the story. There are heated discussions at times in some sub-editorial rooms as to what is the real point of a story. The opinions of experts often differ, and so a story in the process of rewriting gets pulled first one way and then another. One day Lord Northcliffe rang up the news room to say that many people were wearing silk hats at Hampstead that morning and a reporter must be sent out on the story.

It is the Jewish New Year, he said, and they are all wearing their best and going to the synagogue. Now that's a good story for you, if it's properly handled. It ought to be headed "Many tall hats at Hampstead." It's no good heading it "Jewish New Year." People will be captured by the heading about the hats . . . These are the little, well-written, out-of-the-way stories of which we want more in the paper.

Short striking words are essential in bold headings, and the Anglo-Saxon language has a great fund of these. If the rules of your office allow (note the "if") it is a help to be able to use "dole" for unemployment insurance benefit (though the term is correct only for the uncovenanted benefit); "wed" for marry; "Red" for Bolshevik; "axe" for drastic economy in national expenditure; "foe" for enemy; "plane" for aeroplane; "Gib." for Gibraltar, etc. The use of nouns as adjectives causes scruples in some offices, though the style of heading known to philologists as the "agglutinate" is now largely in vogue, such as—

POLICEMAN'S EMBANKMENT DIVE

OXFORD SWIVEL ROWLOCKS  
EXPERIMENT

RECLUSE MURDER TRIAL QUEUE

LINER MAIL-BAG THEFT HUNT  
SURPRISE

These are English uses. An American heading that beats them was—

DEATH PACT LEAP FROM 18TH  
STORY

RESULT GIN PARTY CORONER  
AVERS

This is really an "agglutinate" that tries to wriggle its way into a sentence. Moreover, it embraces a verb, active, indicative, and present, and a prejudice against its employment still survives here and there. An example of extravagance in its use is—

BISHOP FLAYS MODERN GIRL

which only means that his lordship criticizes adversely some of the erroneous ways of the up-to-date girl.

Keep within the facts in your headline; do not be tempted to overstate for the purpose of obtaining dramatic effect. For instance, do not write "Express train leaps rails at 70 miles an hour," if the highest estimate of speed in the story is 50 miles an hour.

Humour in a heading is excellent if well done. Puns require caution. "Kitten cat-astrophe," "An Easter Egstasy," "Bank squally-day," and lines of that character are taboo in most offices. Two clever lines were: "Our far flung bottle line" (when passengers on board a British liner threw the bottles overboard on reaching Prohibition territorial waters); and "No Moore" (when the tenth child in a family named Moore was christened "No"). One not quite so good but passable was: "Scarcity of plumbers in the land of leeks" (plumbers being needed in a Welsh town). A more cautious sample of humour, but significant in the paper in which it appeared, was "High Comedy: the Graf Zep-pelin's Clown," heading a story descriptive of the first performance of its kind in an airship. Alliteration is sometimes effective, but it should be used with care and reserve. Shakespeare was an artist in alliteration, as witness: "Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief."

My advice to beginners is to practise the art of headline writing, because the skill thereby acquired will prove invaluable. Sit down to your paper, take the main head and reduce it; make a subsidiary head the "splash," which means finding fresh ideas in the story and more lines. Juggle with transpositions, alternative ideas, varying numbers of units in the line, different styles to suit different papers, and so on. Practice makes perfect. It is the way to get into the small class of first-rate caption writers.

## CHAPTER VI

### *FASHIONS IN PAGE-MAKING*

THE newspapers of to-day are distinguished from those of earlier times by a great advance in (a) news organization and variety of "features," and (b) typographical display and elaborate make-up.

(a) There has been a vast extension of the area of news. World communications have developed so enormously that the services of news within the reach of national papers are much more complete and comprehensive. "News" has a fuller and more varied interpretation, and stories are exploited much more vigorously and exhaustively. Anything of "human interest" now comes within the orbit of news, and an original and creative outlook has pushed activity into regions left entirely untouched in past generations.

(b) The art of make-up has been perfected to give striking and original effect to the immensely varied products of news and feature organization. The resources of typography are used to the full in the service of this ever-expanding art, which aims not only at a proportioned expression of the inherent value of stories, but also at arresting the reader's attention and interest even when the news itself is not of first-rate significance.

I have placed these two dominant characteristics of the popular Press of to-day in the

foregoing order because that, in my view, is their relative importance. The actual production of the news, the feature, and even the "stunt," comes first in order of time and also of value. In the store the art of the window dresser must always be the complement of the work of the inventor and the designer, and the toil of the field and the factory. So in the newspaper the one conceives, obtains, and otherwise produces the story and the stunt; the other designs the dress in which they shall appear, and decides the order of their precedence in display. Both are essential to the process of "putting over" to the public.

A study of the files of the older papers shows that while their pages were often arid Saharas of type, difficult and uninviting to read, they contained much good material, great news, and fine writing. Historic events of the last century were recorded in classic prose of stately dimensions, which the hasty reader in the tube and the omnibus of to-day would be unable to absorb. Hence, now we have greater brevity coupled with more comprehensiveness and variety, and make-up schemes which assist the hurried reader to find what is wanted with the minimum of effort. These schemes vary greatly in style, and the make-up artists of the advanced school often produce *outré* effects. It is surely wrong when news values are distorted to meet the requirements of theories of attractive make-up. Sensation-mongering of this type is apt to defeat its own purpose in the long run. Readers will not be attracted for ever by counterfeit



thrills, i.e. news put into the exaggerated garb of a "machine-made" splash. The sounder policy, adopted by the more responsible Press, is to display the contents of the paper for what they are genuinely worth. Even if the cubist maker-up were brought to tears because, on a day when there was no news of real outstanding importance, the leading story were reduced to a single column head, without a banner and minus black type and indents, that would be a negligible incident compared with an honesty and sobriety of news display which would appeal to sensible and discerning readers. So much can be admitted without prejudice to the view that the brighter make-up methods of modern newspapers, used with fairness and discretion, are a great gain.

In his study of Lord Northcliffe, Dr. R. Macnair Wilson has the following commentary on the subject of this chapter—

Newspaper making . . . is a most subtle and most difficult craft. To the ordinary mind print is just—print. To the mind of young Harmsworth, print seemed, on the contrary, a medium almost as sensitive as are the pigments of an artist. He saw associations between typesetting and authorship, between the nature of an article and the manner in which it was presented. He began to understand the immense power of suggestion which rests in headlines and cross-headings. He began to think in pages as well as in columns and lines.

There is a real distinction between the column and the page of any paper. For the column gains or loses importance according to its position in the page. A column can be effectively "hidden" in the very middle of a page; again, a column, or even a single paragraph, can be effectively "shown" in the same position. A given bunch of articles, if "set up" in the right kind of type, and placed in the right way on the page devoted to them, becomes something different, strangely but really different, from the same bunch of articles wrongly "set up" and wrongly "shown."

"Right" and "wrong," in this instance, however, are relative





terms. There are still journalists, distinguished journalists, who dislike or despise the craft of the page-maker. They argue that an article should stand on its merits and that readers should not be led, or induced, to read by any kind of artifice. Such men seemed to Harmsworth strangely uncomprehending. For his sole idea was to convey the contents of his paper swiftly and easily to the reader's mind. "Right" page-making, in his view, was the sort of page-making which most effectively achieved this object. Indeed, he declared once in my hearing that right page-making corresponded exactly to clear and forcible speaking. "Does anybody," he asked, "prefer a monotonous, indistinct voice to a musical and distinct voice?"

### *Quality of Surprise*

The page-maker has won, as far as the great majority of British newspapers are concerned. I have heard the story that the new style of make-up was brought to London from America by the late Mr. S. J. Pryor, who applied at Carmelite House his experience of New York journalism. This innovation set the pace in this country. The result is shown effectively in the up-to-date pages illustrated (Plates VI, VIII, and IX). There was undoubtedly room for improvement in the make-up methods of our newspapers. Former generations of journalists were quite indifferent to display. For instance, W. T. Stead's famous articles on "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," in the *Pall Mall Gazette* had no bold headlines; the first of a series which caused a great sensation in the country began a few lines from the foot of a column! Such a thing would be impossible to-day, and rightly so, of course.

In one of the intimate telephone talks recorded by Mr. Tom Clarke in his book, Northcliffe is reported as saying—

When I was 17 and working on the "stone" I was offered £500 a year by several London papers . . . How old is the man on the "stone" for the *Daily Mail*?—About 33, I think.—Twice as old as I was when I had my first day on the "stone" at Coventry. Tell our man that what he wants to cultivate is the element of surprise on the main news page.

The work of the make-up chief or night editor on a morning paper is closely associated with that of the sub-editors. Constant co-operation is essential with regard to the preparation and the placing of stories. Hence, a sub-editor will inevitably come into contact with the stone. He may be asked to make-up a story he has prepared or supervised. The sporting and financial sub-editors regularly make-up their own pages. A sub-editor who understudies stonework, and shows facility in it, is on the way to advancement to an executive position. It must be realized that make-up is a special job, requiring close study, adaptability, and mental alertness. The prime qualification, I think, is a sure judgment of news values. An editorial conference is held in the afternoon, at which the chiefs of staff dissect and discuss a schedule of the day's news and features prepared by the news-editor. An estimate of length is given with each item, and a total of news matter and advertisements is reached, indicating the number of pages required. Perhaps on 16 pages the schedule shows an excess of a few columns and the paper is called "tight." If it is decided not to exceed 16 pages the night editor warns the sub-editors to "keep everything down," and even then things are crowded out at the last moment, in spite of vigorous cutting on the stone.





*Late News*

Very often the schedule estimates have to be discarded because the whole balance has been upset by important late news, which, of course, always takes precedence. Morning papers prefer news which is too late for the evening papers to cover, although, of course, important news has to be adequately treated, even though it has been in print the night before. The night-editor begins to plan his pages after the conference, and for this purpose uses a "dummy," which is a set of small pages (blank but for the column rules) stitched together up to 16 or 20 pages or whatever the size of the paper is to be. If the big news increases very much, the night-editor has to decide whether an increase of size is warranted. This is a somewhat weighty matter, as to increase the number of pages means a heavy expense. The known news as indicated by the schedule gives the matter for a provisional make-up scheme for the whole paper. A distinction must be made here between the larger "class" papers and the smaller "popular" papers. The latter, with their huge sales and more complicated distribution tasks, go to press earlier, and an increase of size after the night's plans have been definitely laid would be impossible. The other class of papers, however, begin machining later and would, if news of the first importance required the space, add pages to the scheduled size to cover it adequately. The alternative to extra pages is to wipe out large tracts of existing news. Each department



has made its demand on space: law, Parliament, sport, finance and commerce, social and personal, besides the general home and foreign news, the pictures and the special features. Balance has to be preserved amid these rival claimants to the coveted columns; for the make-up editor is responsible for the production of a whole paper that is in harmony with the accepted policy and ideal, and that will stand the test of keen competition. It is anxious and responsible work, more especially when values are fluctuating with the incoming of fresh unexpected news.

As the "away" pages are in process of being completed and sent to press, the most important stories are kept for the main news pages, and this involves close estimating of positions and quantities to provide accurately for both sets of pages. In the absence of an obvious story to hold the field, one of the later tasks is "getting the lead" or splash. Some popular papers seem to aim at distinctive "leads," which no other paper is likely to adopt. The element of "surprise" is involved in this, as it is also in securing bold contrasts in subjects and headings at the tops of columns. All this is part of the art, and great pains are often taken to secure these effects. The night-editor visualizes his pages as he designs them. The layman, or general reader, gets an impression of general effect, pleasing, arresting, or otherwise, as he surveys the paper, without understanding the typographical and make-up technique involved. The night-editor must have the eye of the layman



MR. SNOWDEN TO SQUEEZE INCOME-TAX PAYERS.

THREE-QUARTERS  
ON JANUARY 1.  
2<sup>ND</sup> EXTRA ON PETROL.  
£20,000,000 RAID ON  
EXCHANGE FUND.  
1<sup>ST</sup> IN £ TAX ON LAND  
VALUES IN 1933.  
ECONOMY OR MORE  
TAXES NEXT YEAR.



TRANSFORMING FIGHTING IN  
A NEWSPAPER  
THE MIDLANDS  
NEW JOURNAL  
A QUICK SUCCESS  
RUBBIES ROLLED  
Pee's Story of  
Iland Pauc

£1,000,000 HOME TO THE  
KING TO-DAY, and Queen.  
DUNLOPS PASS  
DIVIDEND.  
THE PRINCE'S  
MESSAGE  
THE INDIAN BOYCOTT  
HENDON TAMPON  
PLANS.

THE PRINCE'S  
MESSAGE  
THE INDIAN BOYCOTT  
HENDON TAMPON  
PLANS.

THE PRINCE'S  
MESSAGE  
THE INDIAN BOYCOTT  
HENDON TAMPON  
PLANS.

SHORTTEST BUDGET.  
By MONTAGUE SMITH

BIGGEST  
DERBY  
PRIZE £7,500  
MUSI-BL-WON  
For United Team at  
Dunstable  
Dad Unit

ROYAL VALENTY  
SHOW  
LATEST NEWS

ANGRY SOCIALISTS.  
By OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT



LIFE SENTENCE FOR  
GAWLATI  
No tiresome  
waiting while  
the car Battery is  
charged

THE CITY VIEW  
By J. H. G. G. G.

THE CITY VIEW  
By J. H. G. G. G.

A new  
**EDISWAN**  
DRY-CHARGED STARTER BATTERY  
lited and ready for use in a few  
hours - by any good garage or  
EDISWAN SERVICE STATION

and the knowledge of the technician to do his work efficiently.

### *An Amateur Victory*

In this connection an amusing story is told in "Friends and Adventures" by "T," of *Punch*—

One adventure in printing fills me with a chuckling satisfaction because of the victory of amateur over professional which concluded it. I was asked in 1925 to recast the format of the *Morning Post*. Among other more fundamental changes I suggested removing those unnecessary little "rules" that divide the headlines of the same article from one another. White, I argued, was a better contrast than grey; and a line in a space gives an effect of grey to the eye. "Impossible," said the technical men, "you don't understand. It's just like you amateurs, rushing in to teach us our job." And they proceeded to overwhelm me with reasons which the sequel, I think, excuses me from reproducing. Being a crafty soul, I asked Ivor Fraser, the manager, to have a double-page opening of the paper set both with and without these rules. The objectors were called in to the conference with soft guile.

T. explained humbly that, of course, he only submitted his ideas subject to the criticism of the technical men, sub-editors, and what not. They knew; he didn't. He could only do his best, as invited by the board. Which of these two arrangements did they prefer? The experts looked, peered, knitted their brows, lit cigarettes, put on spectacles, gazed at one another and at T., and finally said, "But we don't see any difference between them!" . . . Withdrawal of body of experts looking exceedingly crestfallen. If I've played this kind of trick on "experts" once I've done it a dozen times.

One of the broad rules of make-up is that the main news page must carry as many interesting stories as possible. There must be no tops without headlines, as there used to be in days when a story exceeding a column continued at the top of the next column. To-day it is "continued on page umpteen." I have seen a front page so elaborately decked out with banners, wide and deep headings, pictures, variegated introductions, boxes and cut-offs, that there

was scarcely any room in any of its columns for a piece of the real solid story above the "continued" line. This must be extremely irritating to the reader. The new systems, as well as the old, have vices. In order to get the maximum number of strong news points on the main page the night-editor welcomes a plentiful supply of "short stuff" from the sub-editors. Stories that are not tops but are still of special value are placed "above the fold," i.e. in the top half of the page; stories that have to go in the paper at all costs are marked "must" by someone in authority.

It is impossible within my limits to enter in much detail into the night-editor's work. As the pages are locked-up "blanket proofs" are pulled and quickly scanned as the forme is being sent into the foundry. There are many mistakes to be watched for, and a trained eye quickly detects them. One of the worst is a "double," i.e. giving the same news twice. In theory this should never happen, but it occasionally does, even in the best regulated offices. In revising a blanket pull of a page one has to watch for many things—paragraphs dropped in the wrong place; headings placed on, and paragraphs placed in, the wrong story; rules in the wrong place or upside down; irregular placing of cross-heads; incorrect captions to pictures; ugly "carry-overs"; inaccurate continuation lines; wrong page numbers in cross-references; wrong date lines at the heads of messages; bad balance in the disposition of stories; cuts not well placed in

1st Prize Winner  
 BOOTH'S  
 FIELD LIFT COIN  
 50 CENTS

# Daily Express

TODAY'S WEATHER  
 Mainly Dry



MANCHESTER  
 COMMERCIAL  
 CLOSING NOW ONLY  
 1.30 2.25 5.18

## MR. SNOWDEN'S NO CHANGE NO BRIBERY BUDGET.

1d. A GALLON MORE  
 ON PETROL.

SHOCK FOR PAYERS OF  
 INCOME TAX.

75% DUE ON JANUARY 1.

ANXIETY OF LAND VALUES TO  
 BEGIN IN 1937

There was no chance of a policy to cover the present day's difficulties, Mr. Snowden, to help the Budget. He must have been...  
 At the same time he had to take the extreme Budget...  
 He has the duty of making the country in the next year.



SEAPLANES BOMB  
 MADEIRA.

THE LAST H  
 11 FEBRUARY  
 1937

16 PRISONERS IN  
 ISLAND WAR

By Express Correspondent  
 It is the last communication...  
 It is the last communication...  
 It is the last communication...



FARMERS  
 SHOOT JACK  
 DIAMOND?

By Express Correspondent  
 JACK DIAMOND the editor...  
 He has been...  
 He has been...  
 He has been...

DEATH OF A PRINCE  
 WHO LOST HIS  
 BRITISH TITLES

LATE NEWS

Pre-war Glory  
 Ushers In  
 The London  
 Season.

By LONDON BELIEVES  
 Youth and Money will play  
 a part in London's life...

THE KING'S RETURN  
 TO LONDON  
 POSTPONED

THE KING'S RETURN  
 TO LONDON  
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GO  
 FOUR CORNERS  
 of the  
 Globe  
 NORTH  
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 EAST  
 SOUTH  
 You'll return  
 TO THE  
 THREE CORNERS  
 of  
 London  
 LYONS'  
 CORNER HOUSES

GO  
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 Globe  
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 SOUTH  
 You'll return  
 TO THE  
 THREE CORNERS  
 of  
 London  
 LYONS'  
 CORNER HOUSES

WICKHAMPTON CHURCH  
 OXFORDST & TOTTERHAM ST. 83  
 2 Corners & 100



THE KING'S RETURN  
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"DAILY EXPRESS"

TO THE DEAF  
 THE NEWS CHRONICLE  
 IS PRINTED IN LARGE TYPE  
 FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF  
 THE DEAF

# News Chronicle

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 1932

FOR RELIEF  
 FROM RHEUMATISM  
**GENASPRIN**  
 THE SAFE BRAND

## CHANCELLOR'S LUCKY £20,000,000

Taxpayers Rescued by Dollar Exchange Fund

### INCOME TAX CHANGE

THREE-QUARTERS MUST  
 BE PAID NEXT  
 JANUARY

### 2<sup>nd</sup> ON PETROL

LAND TAX  
 TWO  
 YEARS MUST  
 BE PAID  
 NEXT  
 JANUARY

W

Managers, on one hand, pay three quarters, instead of half, of the tax next January. The other, the petrol duty by 5d - from 4d to 9d.

Taking £1,000,000 from the "Dollar Fund," the Chancellor has a credit in U.S.A.

He has also a credit in the "Dollar Fund," the Chancellor has a credit in U.S.A.

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### MR. SNOWDEN'S COURAGE

A Personal Triumph



Mr. Snowden

### A GRACEFUL TRIBUTE

By Our Parliamentary Correspondent  
 E. CUTHBERT PALMER



Mr. Cuthbert Palmer

### SIR JAMES O'GRADY

WALKING IS AND GOING

WHAT HE SAYS THE NEWS CHRONICLE

### FIGHTING IN MADEIRA

WALSH'S FLEE AT HOLIDAY ISLAND

### TROOPS LANDED

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**NUGGET**  
 BOOT POLISH

Black, Tan, Dark Brown and other shades.

3d. and 6d.

relation to the stories to which they belong; repetitions of the same word in adjacent headlines; rules cutting off the banner line from the story to which it belongs; "follow-on" stories after the wrong main story; stereos of advertisements or anything else in the forme showing black in the white spaces owing to insufficient cutting out; type "off its feet," and other finer points too numerous to mention. A hurried revision of the proof will enable many useful marks to be made to get the page perfected before it goes to the auto-plate machine, and often saves "getting the page back" for correction after the printing run has started.

When the first edition has gone to press the night-editor hands over the work of re-making certain pages for later news to his deputy (often a sub-editor who comes in late), who will carry on in the early hours until the appointed time for closing down. When big news "breaks loose" after midnight, the task of the late man is arduous and responsible. Many cuts have to be made in first edition pages, and for this to be done properly a quick grasp has to be secured of their contents. As a cut is made the headlines have to be watched to prevent lines remaining in that relate to portions of the story that have been cut out. Decisions as to the placing of late news, the sizes of headings and so on, have to be taken rapidly, although they sometimes involve the substitution of a new splash story and the alteration of the balance of a whole page. Nevertheless, these changes, made under stress, are the subject of review



and criticism in the cool light of the morning after.

### *Comparison of Styles*

For the purpose of exact comparison of the styles of news treatment, typographical display and general lay-out, reproductions are given of the main pages of fourteen newspapers (seven London and seven provincial) of the date of the Budget of 1931. It is one of the days when the same story is the inevitable splash in all papers and is therefore suitable for my purpose.

The subject is not "sensational" in the usual meaning, but it is of the first importance because it affects practically everybody in the land and is, therefore, given pre-eminence by all newspapers. It is interesting to all who study journalistic methods to observe in detail how it is handled by papers of all kinds. The pages given also serve to show, not merely the manner of displaying a complicated and difficult story, but also the play of ideas as expressed in the headings, and how critical and partisan points are made in the terse way demanded by the limits of bold type. It was not easy to get into a sharp, clear heading the fact that the Chancellor proposed to collect three-quarters of the income tax on 1st January, instead of one-half as hitherto. Note how the papers tackle this. Pages illustrated elsewhere in this book give opportunities of studying more general news make-up. The editor of the *Daily Herald* expresses the view that Plate IX "puts over"

# THE CHANCELLOR'S WARNING

Parliamentary Affairs  
NOT SURPRISED

Mr. Snowden on Budget  
Money

A CHIEF OF THE BUDGET

From the Parliamentary Correspondent

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MR. SNOWDEN SPEECH  
Before the House of Commons

BUDGETARY POLICY

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## ECONOMY NECESSARY OR NEW TAXATION NEXT YEAR

### Budget of Devices to Tide Over Hard Times

### EXCHANGE ACCOUNT RAIDED FOR £20,000,000

### Heavier First Instalment of Income-Tax

### PETROL DUTY UP BY 2d. A GALLON

### Tax of 1d. per £1 on Land Values for 1933

The following is a summary of the Budget Measures which are expected to be announced in the Budget Statement on May 12.

**INCOME TAX.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of income tax from 5s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of tax on the first £100 of income from 5s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of tax on the remainder of income from 5s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total income tax by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

**EXCHANGE ACCOUNT.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of exchange duty from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of duty on the first £100 of exchange from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of duty on the remainder of exchange from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total exchange duty by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

**PETROL TAX.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of petrol duty from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of duty on the first £100 of petrol from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of duty on the remainder of petrol from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total petrol duty by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

**LAND TAX.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of land tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of tax on the first £100 of land from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of tax on the remainder of land from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total land tax by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

**STAMP DUTY.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of stamp duty from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of duty on the first £100 of stamp duty from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of duty on the remainder of stamp duty from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total stamp duty by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

**WINE TAX.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of wine tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of tax on the first £100 of wine from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of tax on the remainder of wine from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total wine tax by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

**TELEPHONE TAX.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of telephone tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of tax on the first £100 of telephone tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of tax on the remainder of telephone tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total telephone tax by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

**POSTAGE TAX.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of postage tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of tax on the first £100 of postage tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of tax on the remainder of postage tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total postage tax by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

**STAMP DUTY.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of stamp duty from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of duty on the first £100 of stamp duty from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of duty on the remainder of stamp duty from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total stamp duty by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

**WINE TAX.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of wine tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of tax on the first £100 of wine from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of tax on the remainder of wine from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total wine tax by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

**TELEPHONE TAX.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of telephone tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of tax on the first £100 of telephone tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of tax on the remainder of telephone tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total telephone tax by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

**POSTAGE TAX.**—The Government intend to raise the rate of postage tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. in the year 1933-34. This will be done by increasing the rate of tax on the first £100 of postage tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. and by increasing the rate of tax on the remainder of postage tax from 10s. 6d. to 11s. 6d. The result of this change will be to increase the total postage tax by £20,000,000 in the year 1933-34.

BUDGET CRITICISM  
How it was Received in  
Edinburgh

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## POINTS FROM MR. SNOWDEN'S SPEECH

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PARLIAMENT IN SESSION

MR SNOWDEN'S BUDGET

"TEMPORARY MEASURES"

Raids and Expedients; Chancellor Marks Time

2d per Gallon Increase in Petrol Only New Taxation

Chancellor's Plans to Meet the Deficit

FROM HIS OWN ORIGINATIONS  
RESPONSIBILITY, MINDS ARE  
SEEN FROM GALLERY

FUNDS FROM DOLLAR EXCHANGE ACCOUNT

INSISTENCE ON ECONOMY

HEAVIER TAXATION FORECAST IF EXPENDITURE IS NOT REDUCED

**PERSONAL REVENUE**  
The Chancellor's Budget has been described as a "budget of expedients" and "raids" on the Treasury. It is a budget of "temporary measures" and "expedients" which will not meet the deficit in the long run. The Chancellor has marked time and has not made any attempt to reduce the deficit. He has only increased the petrol tax by 2d per gallon. This is a "raid" on the Treasury and will not meet the deficit in the long run. The Chancellor has also increased the tax on the value of land. This is another "raid" on the Treasury and will not meet the deficit in the long run. The Chancellor has also increased the tax on the value of land. This is another "raid" on the Treasury and will not meet the deficit in the long run. The Chancellor has also increased the tax on the value of land. This is another "raid" on the Treasury and will not meet the deficit in the long run.

**Change in Income-Tax Collection**  
**TAXATION OF LAND VALUES SCHEME**

**M**ANAGEMENT OF THE BUDGET. The Chancellor has marked time and has not made any attempt to reduce the deficit. He has only increased the petrol tax by 2d per gallon. This is a "raid" on the Treasury and will not meet the deficit in the long run. The Chancellor has also increased the tax on the value of land. This is another "raid" on the Treasury and will not meet the deficit in the long run. The Chancellor has also increased the tax on the value of land. This is another "raid" on the Treasury and will not meet the deficit in the long run. The Chancellor has also increased the tax on the value of land. This is another "raid" on the Treasury and will not meet the deficit in the long run.

**MR SNOWDEN'S FINANCIAL REVIEW**  
The Chancellor's Budget has been described as a "budget of expedients" and "raids" on the Treasury. It is a budget of "temporary measures" and "expedients" which will not meet the deficit in the long run. The Chancellor has marked time and has not made any attempt to reduce the deficit. He has only increased the petrol tax by 2d per gallon. This is a "raid" on the Treasury and will not meet the deficit in the long run. The Chancellor has also increased the tax on the value of land. This is another "raid" on the Treasury and will not meet the deficit in the long run. The Chancellor has also increased the tax on the value of land. This is another "raid" on the Treasury and will not meet the deficit in the long run.

BUDGET IN BRIEF



POINTS FROM THE SPEECH

"THE GLASGOW HERALD"

their ideas of make-up better than the *Herald Budget* page which is given, and I agree.

Looking at the set of *Budget* pages closely, one notes that only two of the papers still adhere to the single column for the big news. *The Times* (Plate X) and the *Birmingham Post* (Plate XI) have not yet yielded to the double column fashion which has swept over the Press as a whole. They, however, admit black type in the matter, but use it sparingly. In *The Times*, first column, the subsidiary headings used for the *Budget* analysis are effectively shown up in 10-point Old Face Heavy, full out with thick rules under, over paragraphs indented full out and 1 em. In the table below the chief lines are thrown up in black. This being the main page, only the vital table of figures is given, but elsewhere a whole page of tabular matter from the Treasury White Paper and views on the *Budget* are given, with a cross-reference on the main page. Two or three other papers adopt the same system, but the popular papers content themselves mostly with the full two-column summary given on their main pages. They have no "away" pages to resort to. [I feel tempted to apologize for the use of the word "popular." Some characterization is needed to indicate classes of papers, and one reads in the technical Press of "popular" and "class" papers. The words serve the purpose, and must not be taken in any invidious sense. Some papers in these days, like their American contemporaries, seem to aim at both "popular" and "class" appeal.]

The *Birmingham Post* looks even more solid than *The Times*. It retains the old plain capitals of the body founts for most of its headings, but the leading line on its Budget story is a concession to the modern cult of black. It is the only paper to put some of the heaviest Budget tables on its main page, involving the use of the smallest type, which is generally banned in that page. All papers have a proper prejudice against using anything smaller than minion there. The restraint evident in the *Birmingham Post* gives dignity of appearance without any sacrifice of efficiency in news treatment. It is all a matter of taste and custom.

The *Daily Telegraph* (Plate XII) and the *Morning Post* (Plate XIII) show how the walls of Jericho have fallen at the blast of the "modern" trumpet. Within almost recent memory they both belonged to the older school of make-up; now they use all the latest gadgets. Unlike *The Times*, which preserves uniform character in its type as well as the single-column heading, they introduce a variety of founts, especially the *Morning Post*. The heading "Fighting in Madeira" is a type more usually found in general printing than in newspaper headings. The vertical rule that halves the double column heading in places has a pleasant effect in appearance and makes the matter more readable. Type in wide measure is more difficult to follow through, in reading, than the single column. True to its partiality for variety of type the *Morning Post* uses some distinctive blacks throughout its double column.

# PLATE XX

ENTER GUARDIAN, TUESDAY, APR

AN EMERGENCY BUDGET

MR SNOWDEN'S

MR. SNOWDEN AS  
OPTIMIST

THE PRINCES  
HOME TO-DAY

ARCTIC RESCUE

FIGHTING IN

Mr. Snowden Finds Two Roosts  
to Raid

to Windsor

Englishman

Landing by Punitive  
Force

REBEL ROUT

PETROL DUTY UP 2d.

Income Tax Device: You Pay  
Three-quarters in January

LAND VALUES TAX IN 1933

A "Baby" Motor-Cycle Concession  
Help Makers



The single most important addition to the existing  
tax system will be the petrol duty increase.

Twenty Millions from Exchange Account

Mr. Snowden's estimate of a possible £20 million from the  
exchange account is a very rough guess, but it is  
likely to be in the neighbourhood of £20 million.

The Petrol Tax and the Car Owner

BUDGET IN BRIEF

BRITISH MOTOR

"THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"

## PLATE XXI

## A BUDGET WITHOUT SURPRISES

## START ON TAXATION OF LAND VALUES

### A SHORT SPEECH

### NOTATION

## CRUSHED BY RALES

## THE KING'S HEALTH

## SHOTS AT A GANGSTER

**PETROL DIPPY UP BY 2d  
A GALLON**

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◎ 2015 年 11 月 11 日

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### GRAVE CONDITION

### CHANGE IN INCOME TAX PAYMENTS

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### Discussion

## INDEX

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## RIVAL GUNMEN SUSPECTED



'LIVERPOOL POST AND MERCURY'

The *Daily Telegraph* keeps to the same style of type, and introduces Pica, 12-point, which is very rarely used for news, and a bold black type for the Budget points, giving a clear effect.

### *Variety and Contrast*

Looking at the whole pages, it will be seen that, although pride of place is given to the Budget, there is a large amount of other interesting news. The policy in most papers is to get variety and contrast. An analysis of the four "popular" papers shows the following—

*Daily Herald* (Plate XIV), eleven different stories, six pictures, a solus advertisement, and a "house" cut-off.

*Daily Mail* (Plate XV), twelve stories and "fillers," two pictures, a solus and "house" cut-off.

*Daily Express* (Plate XVI), eleven stories, four pictures, and a solus.

*News Chronicle* (Plate XVII), ten stories, a red-ink fudge, four pictures, a map, and a solus.

The most distinctive display is, I think, that of the *Daily Herald*, with its four-column composite picture-and-type heading, and "all black" introduction, both roman and italic. This may suggest the value of a little restraint in display. The giant of the make-up arena places Ossa upon Pelion, as did his classic prototypes, and, failing to scale the heavens, is forced into further exploits until he can go no farther and has to return to simpler methods. Degree and contrast are lost when all is bold, and, what is of great importance, space that is urgently required



for news is wasted on masses of obtrusive type more suited to a poster than a newspaper. These extreme effects can be seen in some American papers; fortunately they have not yet disfigured our Press to any irremediable extent.

The *Daily Herald* page is an intricate piece of work. The Budget is a four-column story, cut into on the left to let in two other stories. A fresh news top is lost by including the picture of the Prime Minister as a part of the big heading. The exiguous spaces left in this page pattern emphasize the difficulty referred to elsewhere of sub-editing stories to the exact length required for fitting. The smaller size of the *Herald* page, than that of the other papers shown, makes the task all the more difficult when "straight" columns are not favoured.

The *Mail*, *Express*, and *News Chronicle*, adopt the usual style of giving the lead on the left of the page, tacked on to a full-width banner. The personal note is well struck by the *News Chronicle* with its two-column box and italic story of "Mr. Snowden's Courage." The *Mail* has, perhaps, the neatest and most compact page, getting all its Budget matter into two columns, with a straightforward make-up plan.

The two Scottish papers afford a fine sense of balance. The *Scotsman* (Plate XVIII), formerly so conservative, is now replete with banner, three-column splash in the centre, and black type in special measure. The *Glasgow Herald* (Plate XIX), has no banner, but scores with two double-column boxes neatly enclosing the briefest of Budget points, with the salient

# PLATE XXII

INDEX AND SUMMARY

BUDGET FAILS TO HELP INDUSTRY.	SIR J. O'GRADY'S NEW POST.	INDIA RIOTING; FIGHTING BEGINS FEARFUL.	IN MADEIRA. Landing of Government Troops.	PRINCE'S HOPE TODAY Flying from Paris to Windsor.
Unemployment Issue Ignored: No Revenue Tariff.	Governor of Falkland Islands.	COMMUNIST INVASION Increased.	REFUGES CAPTURED	RAVE ESCORT
TAX ON LAND VALUES.	FORMER LEADS MP Popularity During Office in Tasmania	MOSLEMS WARNED Troops on General and Police Armed.	DESTRUCTION OF WIRE STATION	
Petrol Tax Up: £20,000,000 Raid on Exchange Reserve Fund				
SPEEDING UP OF INCOME TAX PAYMENT.				

THE NATIONAL BALANCE SHEET

"THE YORKSHIRE POST"



passages from the speech well set-out below. The whole page is given to the Budget, but the *Scotsman* finds two columns for other news.

The *Manchester Guardian* (Plate XX) and *Liverpool Post* (Plate XXI) give four Budget columns, two of which are a double-column summary, and devote three columns to other news. The *Yorkshire Post* (Plate XXII) is singular in giving only two columns to the Budget on this page, but it is "all black" varied by the use of italics with shoulder heads full out, and picked out with heavy rules. The *Western Mail* (Plate XXIII) presents a symmetrical page. The Budget claims the two "wings," and there are three columns of other news between them. The cut-off rule under the banner might have been kept to the three centre columns, as columns six and seven are part of the Budget story and could have had an ornamental rule to correspond with that in columns one and two. The whole page is clear, balanced, and effective.

One typographical point in these pages is worth noting, and that is the contrasts secured by the use of lower-case type in alternate lines in the headings in the *Yorkshire Post*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Scotsman*, and *Glasgow Herald*. The effect thus obtained is more striking than the mere variation of point size in a heading of capitals.

### *The Ideal Size*

The larger matters of broad make-up policy do not come within the scope of this book, but

may be briefly mentioned. There is a divergence of view as to the use of the front page for news or advertisements; this is governed by business considerations. Similarly, opinions vary about the ideal size—standard or “tabloid.” There is no doubt that the smaller folio sizes are easier to handle, especially in crowded vehicles, but there is much to be said in favour of the larger sizes that still hold the field. When Northcliffe Newspapers acquired the *Leicester Evening Mail* it was changed from tabloid to standard. One of the main reasons, pointed out by the managing director, was that it is a physical impossibility to give adequate display to the day’s news in a small page, and that a first-class story means several continuations from one page to another, which cause as much annoyance to the reader as the handling of a standard size. It is generally admitted, however, that the tabloid size is right for picture papers like the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Sketch*. From the sub-editorial point of view it is a marvel of compression to get the world’s news of 24 hours into about three pages of this size. It is done, but there is a drastic sacrifice of interesting detail. Another question of major importance is that of the respective spaces to be allotted to news and features. The pages of magazine character which abound in the popular papers are ingenious appeals to varied interests—home, holiday, sport, hobby, food, apparel, and all the rest. Women’s concerns are lavishly provided for. So assertive do these feature pages become, however, that the space left for real news is

often unduly restricted, and loud protests are heard from the news and sub-editorial rooms. The argument that the first necessity of the newspaper is news cannot be gainsaid.

Some of the most anxious moments in the night editor's work are associated with Royal illnesses and the deaths of famous people. When Edward VII was seized with sudden illness on the eve of his coronation, swift and drastic changes had to be made to deal with the new and alarming development. And when the life of George V was at stake the papers had to be prepared for the worst. The big biography was brought up to date and got into type, pages of pictures were assembled and made up, and everything was ready. Happily the King recovered, and the "pulls" of these pages remain, a monument of prevision. When a notable person dies at a late hour, sweeping changes of make-up have to be made to admit the biography, either waiting in manuscript in "the morgue," or already in type, if the subject's illness is known. To find a large space like this means either the removal of features or stories wholesale, or the all-round trimming down of news.

## CHAPTER VII

### *LEGAL PITFALLS: LIBEL AND CONTEMPT*

MANY journalists of experience become quite efficient amateur lawyers. The work itself is the training. Reporting in the Courts is a liberal education for the observant man and is an excellent preparation for the responsibilities of sub-editing. The difficulty is that in this matter of libel there is no mathematical precision, and two and two do not always make four. Yet one must have a working knowledge of the subject because it bears upon all forms of journalistic work. Is a report of a law case, civil or criminal, fairly balanced; is a report of a council or a committee, or a public meeting within the bounds of "privilege"; is a comment "fair" in the legal sense; is a gossip note "defamatory"?—these are some of the questions that confront the sub-editor, and he should be competent generally to give an answer. A big paper has its own legal member of the staff to decide; but that is not so in all offices.

It is the border-line cases that cause the most anxiety and misgiving. Often the sub-editorial mind is torn between loyalty to the safe old maxim: "When in doubt leave out" and the desire not to lose a good piece of news. The best rule is undoubtedly "Safety first," because risky stories can be had at too great a price,

and your proprietors, if they have to pay damages in a libel action, will not appreciate the policy of getting all the news at the risk of it being dangerous. These matters unhappily are not always the subject of deliberation and choice; there is the inexplicable mistake (such as leaving out the little word "not") to which the best brain is sometimes subject, and the subtle libel that lurks unseen. Dead accuracy in the use of words is not easy, as is discovered when a number of men are asked for a precise definition. The writer may not have a full conception of the meaning of his words; and readers may take them in a different sense from that intended. Yet libel cases often turn on the meaning of words examined in an ultra-particular way, and the intention of a writer to convey one meaning is no defence if the readers take it in another. Judges and juries interpret things in a way sometimes astonishing to writers and sub-editors. This all goes to enforce the need of extreme care and prevision in writing and passing copy for publication.

To the mind untrained in the subject, abstract legal phraseology is baffling; but the reports of actual cases and decisions, which bring the law down to concrete issues, are most helpful and repay careful study. Judges generally deliver themselves of *obiter dicta*, which, though not carrying the authority of judicial decision, illuminate intricate subjects.

There is another side of the picture which must not be ignored. Newspapers have rights under the law in acting fairly for the public



good. Knowledge is necessary to understand what those rights are and where they end; knowledge means power to use the freedom which English law and custom accord to the Press.

### *What a Libel Is*

A defamatory statement constituting a libel or slander is a statement which exposes any person to hatred, ridicule, or contempt, which causes him to be shunned or avoided, or which tends to injure him in his office, profession, or trade. It is a libel if in writing, printing, or permanent form; a slander, if spoken or (as one authority puts it) indicated with "significant gestures." A libel may be both a civil wrong and a criminal offence, or either; a slander is a civil wrong only.

Get the distinction clear between the two classes of libel—civil and criminal. Strictly speaking, a defamatory libel is a crime as well as a civil injury. Any one can bring a civil action for libel if he chooses, but a criminal prosecution against a newspaper for libel can only be commenced on a special order of a Judge in Chambers (Law of Libel Amendment Act, 1888, Sect. 8). The accused is entitled to be heard before leave to prosecute is given. A Judge will make no order unless he is satisfied that the justice of the case cannot be met by civil action.

The essence of a libel as a criminal offence is that it tends to cause a breach of the peace. The State and the community are concerned in

attacks such as are termed seditious libels. Also, it is to be noted that a libel on an individual may be of such a character that the neighbours are roused to anger and violence and the peace is disturbed. The punishment on conviction of a criminal libel may be a fine or imprisonment or both; the imprisonment not to exceed one year unless the libel is published maliciously and with full knowledge of its falsity, when two years is the maximum term.

In civil cases the aggrieved party issues a writ for libel, and if publication is proved the legal presumption is that he has suffered damage, the amount of which is assessed by the jury, unless the defendant can establish legal justification or excuse for the libel.

Libel may be perpetrated by any person and not newspapers alone. It need not be in writing or printing. For instance, a statue, a caricature, an effigy, chalk marks on a wall, signs or pictures, such as fixing up a gallows on a man's door, painting him in a shameful or ignominious manner, inscribing on the gate of a farmer "this man shot a fox"—these have been held to be libellous.

In order to be defamatory in the legal sense the words must refer to some particular individual, and the plaintiff must prove that he is the individual attacked. There must be a definite imputation on a definite person. If one wrote "All lawyers are thieves," no particular lawyer could sue, there being nothing pointing directly to him.

Sir Hugh Fraser (afterwards Mr. Justice

Fraser) in his valuable "Compendium of the Law of Torts," wrote—

The words complained of must concern the plaintiff himself. They must affect his character or touch him in the way of his profession or trade. If they are directed solely at the plaintiff's goods or his title to property, though an action may lie therefor, it is not an action for libel or slander, but "an action on the case for special damage sustained by reason of the speaking or publication." In some cases, however, an attack on a man's title to property or goods may also injuriously affect his reputation. Thus, it is libellous to write and publish of a bookseller that he sells immoral poems; and to say of a wine merchant that his wine is poisoned, or of a tea dealer that his tea is made green by drying it on copper, or of a fishmonger that he is in the habit of selling decomposed fish, is a slander upon him in the way of his trade.

### *A Dangerous Idea*

But it must be made clear that the idea that so long as no names are mentioned you can say what you like is dangerous. You cannot libel a class. It is safe to say "All company promoters are swindlers," but not to print "All the directors of XYZ & Co. are swindlers." Any one of those directors could sue for libel. Mr. G. F. L. Bridgman, standing counsel to the National Union of Journalists, in "Legal Headlights for Pressmen," crystallizes the matter thus: "You cannot libel a large class, but if you libel a small class you tend to libel each one of its members." I can imagine the distinction between large and small causing much heart-searching in sub-editorial rooms.

The whole question of what may be called "group" or "collective" libels is beset with difficulty. Although no person is specified it is possible to commit a criminal libel on a body of individuals, if the effect is to excite against

a class the hatred of their neighbours. For example, it is simple to understand that a violent attack on the Jews of Whitechapel, or the Roman Catholics of Belfast, might lead to disorder and be regarded as a criminal offence. In one case an editor was prosecuted for publishing a defamatory attack on the whole of the clergy in a particular diocese, although no clergyman was mentioned by name. Such cases are criminal, and not civil, libels. If a plaintiff satisfies the jury that he was referred to in words complained of, he succeeds, even if no name was mentioned, but initial letters, asterisks, or a fictitious name were given, or the reference was to a group of which the plaintiff was a member. If the readers of the libel know who is aimed at, the injury is the same as if the name were printed. Where it is uncertain whether the plaintiff was the party aimed at an action fails.

### *A Famous Case*

The danger of using names in print (whether fiction, sketches of social life, correspondents' messages or what not), where the matter is at all risky, was effectively brought out in the celebrated case of "*Jones v. Hulton*," in 1909. An article printed in the *Sunday Chronicle* described gay doings at "Motor Mad Dieppe" and, mentioning the name "Artemus Jones," the writer went on—"Really, is it not surprising how certain of our fellow countrymen behave when they come abroad? Who would suppose by his goings-on that he was a churchwarden

at Peckham?" The curious fact was that the plaintiff, a barrister, formerly a journalist, had been an habitual contributor to newspapers published by the defendants, his articles being signed "T. Artemus Jones," or "T.A.J." It was proved that he was not a churchwarden at Peckham. The writer of the article (the Paris correspondent of the paper) declared that he did not know, and had never heard of, the plaintiff, and that the name he used was suggested by the name of Artemus Ward and was only intended to represent a type.

Mr. Justice Channell in his summing-up, said—

The real point is, ought or ought not sensible and reasonable people reading this article, to think it was a mere imaginary person such as Tom Jones, Mr. Pecksniff as a humbug, Mr. Stiggins, or any of that sort of name that one reads of in literature and as types. If you think that any reasonable person would think that, it is not actionable at all. If on the other hand, you think that people would suppose it to mean some real person . . . and those who know of the existence of the plaintiff would think that it was the plaintiff, then the action is maintainable.

The jury awarded the plaintiff £1,750 damages, and in giving judgment the Judge said that the amount was heavy, but the jury were entitled to think that there had been recklessness on the part of the defendants. The judgment was affirmed both by the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords. I have given space to this case because it is a sort of landmark in the libel landscape.

### *Defaming the Dead*

It is sometimes said that you cannot libel the dead. This may be true in the literal sense,

but an important reservation must be made. If the libel can be treated in the criminal sense, i.e. as likely to cause a breach of the peace, it is a punishable offence. The textbooks tell us that it is an offence to publish words defamatory of a dead person if it is done with a malevolent purpose to vilify the memory of the dead, and with a view to injuring his descendants. "A publication tending to disturb the minds of living individuals, and to bring them into contempt and disgrace by reflecting upon persons who are dead, is an offence against the law."

There is danger, too, in premature obituary notices, which are not a very great rarity. A living person who reads the published memoir of himself may find a libel in it. Thus, be sure of the name and the fact when the news of a death comes along. Writers of biographies of persons reported to be dead, and of those who are indubitably dead, do well to remember the maxim *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*.

### *Meaning of Words*

It has been held libellous to write of a man that he is a man of straw a hypocrite, a rascal, an impostor, that he is dishonest, ungrateful, impecunious, insane, and even, in one case, that his conduct has been unfeeling. So, too, ironical praise may amount to a libel, and it has been held libellous to publish in a newspaper a story in which the plaintiff is made to appear ridiculous, even though he has told it himself in the first instance. It is libellous to publish a story

of no literary merit as having been written by an author of standing. On the other hand it has been held not libellous to write of a man that he sued his mother-in-law in a County Court, for he may properly have done so; or that he owes money, for this does not imply that he cannot pay his debts.

The meaning of a printed statement is, as I have already indicated, often the subject of doubt and discussion. Cases not infrequently turn upon it. To decide whether the statement is libellous the Courts construe it in its "natural and ordinary meaning"; if it is not libellous in that sense, the question is the special sense in which it was understood by those who read it. The criterion is what construction a reasonable person would put upon the words. Where both an innocent and a guilty interpretation of the words may be made, the jury has to determine the sense in which they were in fact understood. The onus of proving the special, as distinct from the natural and ordinary, meaning is upon the plaintiff.

### *"Story" in a Headline*

A most interesting case fought over the meaning of a word was the action brought against Hulton & Co. 19 years ago for a headline, published by them, "Student's Legacy Story." It was the heading to a case at Bow Street. For the plaintiff it was admitted that the report without the heading was innocuous, but it was alleged that the headline would convey to the reader that the plaintiff was telling

a cock-and-bull story to the magistrate about a legacy, and that in making the statement he was guilty of perjury. The defendants pleaded that the word "story" bore the ordinary and fair meaning of "narration" or "recital" and was in no sense disparaging to the plaintiff. The special jury in the King's Bench Division gave a verdict for the plaintiff with £10 damages, and judgment was entered accordingly. The case was taken to the Court of Appeal, and the newspaper won.

Lord Justice Scrutton said the question was whether the language used was reasonably capable of a defamatory meaning. Suspicious people might get a defamatory meaning out of even "chops and tomato sauce," but it was not sufficient to suspect that there might be a defamatory meaning. He added that in his opinion the headline suggested that there was something interesting behind. Lord Justice Atkin said that to treat the word "story" as one of a defamatory meaning would seriously restrict the vocabulary of journalists and deprive them of one of their best words. He thought that the word merely connoted an interesting event worth narrating.

A newspaper sued for libel cannot defend itself successfully on the ground that the words were published by accident or mistake, or in jest, or with an honest belief in their truth. Thus, if a possibly libellous statement is to be published—and that is a grave decision to take—complete verification of its truth should be obtained, for in Court mere belief is not enough,



and the truth of the whole statement must be shown. Neither is it a defence to plead that a libel was simply a repetition of what some one else had printed or said, no matter what the other authority was. Hence, it sometimes happens that when a libel has been "lifted" by a number of papers a whole chain of libel actions ensues.

### *Corporations and Companies*

Is it possible to libel a corporation or a company? On this question I will note two cases. In 1891 the Corporation of Manchester sued for a libel contained in a letter published in a newspaper charging it with corruption. The Court of Queen's Bench held that the Corporation could not bring an action on a libel of that description. In 1894, in the action of the South Hetton Coal Company against a newspaper, it was held that the company could, without alleging or proving special damage, maintain an action in respect of a libel reflecting on the management of their trade and business. The paper published an article, "The Homes of the Pitmen: South Hetton," describing a village as being nearly unfit for habitation, and its houses insanitary. The paper pleaded that the statements by its special commissioner were *bona fide* comments on a matter of public interest, made honestly and without malice, and that in their natural meaning they were true. At the hearing at Newcastle the Lord Chief Justice held that the matter was one of public interest and asked the jury whether the comment went

beyond what was fair. He directed the jury that if they found that the comments were unfair and that the statements went to the discredit of the plaintiffs, the action would lie. The jury found for the plaintiffs; damages £25. The defendants applied to the Court of Appeal for a new trial, but the application was dismissed. The Master of the Rolls (Lord Esher) said he agreed with the Lord Chief Justice that the matter was of public interest, but the person who criticized must do so with moderation. He was not prepared to say that if he had been on the jury he would not have found it to be a fair description or fair comment; but also he was not prepared to say that the jury were not entitled to find that it was not a fair description and therefore a libel. The Court could not therefore disturb the verdict of the jury. Lord Justice Lopes expressed the opinion that though a corporation could not maintain an action for libel in respect of anything reflecting upon them personally, yet they could maintain an action for a libel reflecting on the management of their trade and business. The words complained of must attack a corporation or company in the method of conducting their affairs—must accuse them of fraud or mismanagement, or must attack their financial position. The question whether it was fair comment was peculiarly a question for the jury.

### *Defences: Justification*

The chief defences in a libel case are: justification, privilege, fair comment, and apology.

In a civil case the libel is justified if the words are true in substance and in fact. It was laid down by a Judge that, "The law will not permit a man to recover damages in respect of injury to a character which he either does not or ought not to possess." The duty of proving the truth of the libel is upon the defendant; and the plaintiff has not to prove that it is untrue. Exaggerated statements, though possessing a modicum of truth, are dangerous. Thus a journalist who had libelled one man and paid damages succeeded in an action against a paper that called him a "libellous journalist." A similar case was that in which damages were given for the printing of the headline "How Lawyer B Treats his Clients," when the case reported concerned only one client. In another headline case damages were awarded when the words used, "Shameful Conduct of an Attorney," were held to be not justified by the report of the case, the accuracy of the report being admitted.

### *Privilege*

It is highly important that journalists should understand what the privilege is that is enjoyed by newspapers and what are its limits. It applies to reports of Parliament, judicial proceedings, naval, military, and State proceedings, public meetings, and statements from Parliamentary and official papers.

The case of "Wason *v.* Walter" in 1868 established the privilege in newspaper reports of Parliament. The action was against *The Times* for a report of a debate in the House of Lords

containing statements defamatory of an individual. It was held that reports of Parliament were privileged upon proof of their accuracy. In dismissing the action Lord Chief Justice Cockburn said that Parliamentary reports were privileged on the same principle that an accurate report of proceedings in a Court of Justice was privileged, namely, that the advantage of publicity to the community at large outweighed any private injury resulting from the publication.

The privilege enjoyed by Judges in Court and by Members of Parliament in their debates, is absolute; that enjoyed by those who print reports of judicial and Parliamentary proceedings is qualified only by the rule that such reports must be fair and accurate, and that they must be made without malice. Legally, malice is an improper motive, and the onus of its proof is on the plaintiff in an action.

The Law of Libel Amendment Act of 1888 provides that "a fair and accurate report in any newspaper of proceedings publicly heard before any Court exercising judicial authority shall, if published contemporaneously with such proceedings, be privileged, but not so as to authorize the publication of any blasphemous or indecent matter."

It must be noted that privilege is confined to Courts recognized by the law. For instance, a meeting of the London County Council for granting music and dancing licences is not a Court exercising judicial functions, and proceedings before licensing justices are administrative

and not judicial. In this class of proceedings privilege is qualified.

From what has been said it will be seen that newspaper reports of proceedings in the Courts of Justice, to be secure, must be (a) fair and accurate; (b) not prohibited by Order of the Court, and (c) not blasphemous, seditious, or obscene.

The proceedings must be in open Court and the report confined to what is publicly heard. There must be impartial record of both sides of a case. Where a case lasts several days it is inevitable that one side will on occasion have the advantage, but that, of course, is balanced when the other side duly has its innings. It is usual on each day to preface the reports with a brief statement of the case for both sides. Reports of continuing cases are privileged, but there must, of course, be no comment until the decision has been reached. These conditions make legal reporting and sub-editing very difficult and delicate at times, especially in the case of evening papers, whose earlier editions contain only partial reports of a day's hearing. Headlines demand utmost skill and caution. Condensation must preserve "balance," and watch must be kept for opening statements by counsel which may not be borne out by the evidence. These rules equally apply to reports of inquests and public inquiries.

### *The Divorce Court*

The restrictions imposed on the reporting of divorce and other cases by recent legislation

must be noted. The Judicial Proceedings (Regulation of Reports) Act, 1926, prohibits—

(a) In any judicial proceedings any indecent matter or medical or surgical details tending to injure public morals.

(b) In any proceedings for divorce, nullity, judicial separation or restitution of conjugal rights, any particulars except: (1) names, addresses, and occupations of parties and witnesses; (2) concise statement of charges and defence; (3) submissions on points of law; (4) the judge's summing up, the jury's verdict, and the judgment of the Court, with the judge's observations in giving judgment.

### *Public Meetings*

The Law of Libel Amendment Act, 1888, specifically recognized the rights of the Press, and it has been termed the Journalists' Magna Charta. Section 4 may be quoted in full—

A fair and accurate report published in any newspaper of the proceedings of a public meeting or (except where neither the public nor any newspaper reporter is admitted) of any meeting of a vestry, town council, school board, board of guardians, board or local authority formed or constituted under the provisions of any Act of Parliament, or of any committee appointed by any of the above-mentioned bodies, or of any meeting of any commissioners authorized to act by letters patent, Act of Parliament, warrant under the Royal Sign Manual, or other lawful warrant or authority, select committees of either House of Parliament, justices of the peace in Quarter Sessions assembled for administrative or deliberative purposes, and the publication at the request of any Government Office or department, officer of State, commission of police, or chief constable, of any notice or report issued by them for the information of the public, shall be privileged, unless it shall be proved that such a report or publication was published or made maliciously.

Provided that nothing in this section shall authorize the publication of any blasphemous or indecent matter.

Provided also, that the protection intended to be afforded by this section shall not be available as a defence in any proceedings if it shall be proved that the defendant has been requested to insert in the newspaper in which the report or other publication complained of appeared, a reasonable letter or statement by way of contradiction or explanation of such report or other publication, and has refused or neglected to insert the same.

Provided further, that nothing in this section contained shall be deemed or construed to limit or abridge any privilege now by law existing, or to protect the publication of any matter not of public concern, and the publication of which is not for the public benefit.

For the purposes of this section "public meeting" shall mean any meeting *bona fide* and lawfully held for a lawful purpose, and for the furtherance or discussion of any matter of public concern, whether the admission thereto be general or restricted.

It will be noted that the last sentence defining a "public meeting" is not very clear or conclusive, and the careful sub-editor will jealously scrutinize the report of any meeting when its public character is not obvious. I will not attempt, as a layman, to define legal doctrine here. That is the duty of the lawyers.

### *Fair Comment*

In order to justify any comment it makes, a newspaper has to show that it is fair comment on a matter of public interest. The cases decided show that the law permits a reasonable liberty. In an action it is for the Judge to say whether the matter is of public interest, and if he is of opinion that there is some evidence of unfairness, the jury has to find whether, in fact, it is so. If the Judge holds the view that there is no evidence on which a verdict could be rationally founded that the comment is unfair, he can stop the case. It is essentially a matter for the exercise of common sense and an unbiased mind by the journalist in keeping within the bounds of fair criticism.

On this point the following pronouncement by a Judge is valuable.

Nothing is more important than that fair and full latitude of discussion should be allowed to writers upon any public matter, whether it be the conduct of public men or the proceedings in Courts of Justice or in Parliament, or the publication of a scheme or a literary work. But it is always left to a jury to say whether the publication has gone beyond the limits of a fair comment on the subject-matter discussed. A writer is not allowed to overstep these limits.

What is "matter of public interest"? Sir Hugh Fraser gives the following answer in summary form—

1. All State matters; everything which concerns government, either House of Parliament, or any committee thereof.
2. The public conduct of every one who takes part in public life, but not the private conduct of such persons, save in so far as it affects their public relations.
3. Legal and ecclesiastical matters.
4. The management of the poor and the administration of the poor law.
5. Places of public amusement or entertainment.
6. Literature, but not the private character of an author or journalist.
7. Art.
8. Anything, in short, which invites public attention or criticism.

The foregoing catalogue is based throughout on decided cases. No 4 might be expanded to-day, in view of recent developments in national and local government, to include the new authorities now established.

### *Apology*

The fourth defence mentioned is apology. It is provided in Lord Campbell's Libel Act of 1843 that in an action for libel contained in any public newspaper or other periodical publication, it is a good defence to prove that such libel was inserted without actual malice and without gross negligence, and that before the



commencement of the action, or at the earliest opportunity afterwards, the defendant inserted in the paper a full apology for the libel, or that, if the paper in which the libel appeared should be ordinarily published at intervals exceeding one week, he offered to publish the apology in any paper to be selected by the plaintiff. Also, there must be a payment of money into Court by way of amends. None of the other defences (justification, privilege, fair comment) can be pleaded together with the plea of apology.

A study of libel cases decided in the Courts is both instructive and useful for the journalist, who has to watch his points. I will quote a few cases of special interest.

### *Libel by Inference*

A married woman, the wife of a racehorse owner, claimed damages against a picture paper for libel by publication of a photograph of her husband and a single woman with a gossip note in these words: "Mr. C—— [the plaintiff's husband], the racehorse owner, and Miss ——, whose engagement has been announced." The plaintiff contended that the published picture and words meant that her husband had become engaged to be married to the lady named, and that he was not a man bound in lawful wedlock to the plaintiff, and that the plaintiff lived in adultery with him. The defendants denied that the words published bore the meaning alleged, and contended that they did not constitute a libel. They also said that the words in their natural and ordinary significance were true in

substance and in fact. It appeared that two other actions had been brought against newspapers in respect of publication of this photograph and had been settled on certain payments by the defendants.

In evidence for the defence the representative of the agency that supplied the photographs said that at Hurst Park races Mr. C. informed him that he was engaged to the lady who was with him. The witness asked if he could publish the news of the engagement with a photograph of the lady that had been taken. Mr. C. replied "Yes," but said that he did not like the photograph which had been taken. He called the lady over and together they posed for the photograph which was published. The witness said he had never heard whether Mr. C. was or was not married, and it never entered his mind to ask a question about it.

The Judge said that no one suggested that the paper did not act with the utmost honesty, but if in fact one defamed a person, one was liable in damages. If the paper had said: "This is a picture of the bachelor racehorse owner who has just become engaged to be married," there was no doubt what that would convey to reasonable people who knew that Mr. C. and the plaintiff had lived together, and that he had continued to visit her. The question was whether the words complained of mean the same thing—namely, that Mr. C. was a bachelor, free from marriage ties and able to marry this young woman. There was no malice on the part of the paper, but although afterwards informed

that the plaintiff was married to Mr. C., they had not admitted it in their defence, and left her to prove the marriage in Court.

The jury found for the plaintiff with £500 damages, and the judgment entered accordingly was confirmed on appeal. The perils to newspapers disclosed by this case are obvious. It would be possible to trap papers into libellous statements which might deceive the most careful. "Personal" journalism, gossip matter, and pictures are beset with dangers.

### *Rights of the Press*

A clear and outspoken declaration from the Bench on the rights of the Press is worth putting on record.

At Carmarthen Assizes in June, 1930, a libel action was brought by the secretary of a trade union branch against a newspaper, complaint being made of articles headed "The Giant's Strength," "Workmen Turned Adrift," and "Trades Union Tyranny," and also of a leading article which dealt with the alleged expulsion of fourteen members of the union, causing them to lose their employment. There were references in the article to "Union Mandarins" and the "tyrannical and callous" action of union officials. The defendant pleaded that the words had no defamatory meaning and were fair comment made in good faith and without malice. The jury returned a verdict for the defendant.

MR. JUSTICE ROCHE, in summing up, said he thought that fair comment was the real point of importance to the general public. Juries might not lightly put a limit to fair criticism. The Press had the right of criticizing on accurate facts the

attitude and action of people like trade union leaders dealing with matters of public importance. It was the business of the Press to look into abuse and to find fault and criticize on behalf of the public. There was an old saying, "It is no use keeping a dog and doing the barking yourself." There were a number of dogs which barked at different times; and as long as they did it honestly they were exercising a useful function.

Papers, like *Truth* and *John Bull*, that deliberately embark upon the exposure of scandals of all kinds in the public interest, have to be very sure of their facts, so that the defence of truth and justification in the case of a libel action may be put forward with a good prospect of success. One or two legal decisions may be given to indicate the kind of criticism and exposure that has been vindicated.

### *Successful Exposures*

An attack on a matrimonial agency by *John Bull* led to an action. The plaintiff said that by the words complained of the defendants meant that he was obtaining money from young girls by falsely representing to them that he would introduce them to men who wished to get married; that he knowingly introduced to young girls who wished to get married men who intended not to marry but to seduce them; that he extorted money from poor people and did not render the services he had contracted to render; that he was a cheat, an unscrupulous impostor, a hypocrite, a rascal, a thief, and a criminal; that his character was infamous; and that he was guilty of the offence of obtaining money by false pretences. The plaintiff said that in consequence of the alleged libel he had been held up

to ridicule, odium, hatred, and contempt, and that the business in which he was interested had been injured. The defendants did not admit that the articles bore the alleged meaning. Further, or alternatively, they pleaded that the words were true in substance and in fact.

After hearing evidence on both sides, Mr. Justice Avory, in summing up, said the broad issue was a serious one. It was serious for the plaintiff, but it was also serious from the public point of view because, if the allegations which had been made against the plaintiff were true, it was not only well that his business should be damaged, but also that it should be closed down altogether. It might be that in the articles there were what might be called "journalistic touches," but that did not affect the broad question which the jury had to determine. The jury returned a verdict for the defendants, and judgment was entered accordingly.

*John Bull* scored another success when proceeded against by the proprietor of a restaurant in Soho (a coloured man). The article complained of was headed "Terrible Negro Haunt. Café That Must be Closed," and alleged that the place was a "rendezvous for coloured criminals of every description and ought to engage the immediate attention of the police." The paper admitted publication and pleaded justification. The verdict and judgment were for the defendants.

### *A Fearless Unmasking*

The campaign of the *Daily Mail* against "share-pushers" is well within memory. The

fearless attitude of that paper under the threat of proceedings was expressed in the following article on 23rd December, 1927, the writ therein mentioned having been issued eight days before—

The British public will be surprised to learn that Jacob Factor, the notorious share pusher, who found England too hot for him after the *Daily Mail* exposure, is once again back in London. Through his solicitors, Messrs. Zeffertt and Heard, of 17 Coleman Street, London, E.C.2, he has issued a writ against the *Daily Mail* claiming damages for libel.

We thought we had succeeded in chasing this arch-swindler back to his haunts in America for good, but it appears that he has managed to get into this country again and is living for the time being at 91 Jermyn Street, London.

The writ is issued in the name of John Factor. His solicitors have informed Messrs. Lewis and Lewis, who act for the *Daily Mail* in these matters, that he is the Jacob Factor with whom we are familiar. His fraudulent share dealings have been repeatedly exposed in this newspaper and in our courageous contemporary, *Truth*.

If Jacob Factor imagines that the issuing of the writ will muzzle us while he is engaged on some new deal he is labouring under a misapprehension.

Contending that this article was calculated to interfere with the administration of justice, the plaintiff obtained a rule *nisi* for a writ of attachment for alleged contempt of Court against Mr. W. G. Fish, editor of the *Daily Mail*. The writ of 15th December was based on an article published on that date referring to James Montgomery, who had been sentenced to hard labour at the Old Bailey, as "a leader of the gang of share-pushing pests who, in association with the notorious Jacob Factor, have for several years been defrauding people all over Great Britain."

The Court discharged the rule *nisi* against the editor. In delivering judgment the Lord Chief Justice said—

The editor of the *Daily Mail* had contended that the present case was one in which the writ for libel was not issued by Factor with the genuine intention of proceeding to trial and clearing his character of the aspersions cast on it by the article of 15th December, but was issued to enable him to procure immunity from further attacks while the action was pending. It appeared from Mr. Fish's affidavit that, from 6th March, 1926, to 24th July, 1926, the *Daily Mail* published a series of articles attacking the applicant under the name of "Jacob" Factor. The language was unequivocal. It included such expressions as "smooth-tongued thief," "arch-swindler," "out-and-out swindle," "fleecing the public," "career of fraud," "robbing the unwary," and "confidence dodge." Those attacks ceased only when Factor left the country.

Factor, however, took no proceedings on any of them, defamatory though all of them undoubtedly were. Nor had he, in the proceedings now pending, made any complaint of any of those charges made against him. On the contrary, in his statement of claim his complaint was most carefully confined to the allegation that he was carrying on his frauds in conjunction with Montgomery . . . The Court found it impossible to believe that an action so framed could have been launched in order that a jury might vindicate Factor's character and award damages for the injury done to it—the avowed and legitimate object of an action for libel. That view was emphasized by the fact that the article of 23rd December was full of defamatory matter and yet no writ for libel had been issued in respect of it. It was also emphasized by the language of Factor's affidavit in support of the rule, which again was carefully framed to deny specifically only so much of the allegations complained of in the alleged libel as charged an association of Factor with Montgomery.

The Court was not satisfied that the article of 23rd December—coming as it did, after a long series of similar articles; being but a repetition of charges already often made against Factor and not complained of; and avoiding, as it did, any further mention of the alleged association of Factor with Montgomery—was calculated to prejudice the trial of the only issues which Factor had chosen to raise—namely, that of his association with Montgomery and of the damages which he should obtain if that issue were found in his favour. In those circumstances the case was not one in which the Court would intervene. On the contrary . . . if half of what the *Daily Mail* had said about Factor (which had not been complained of by him) were true, it was very much for the public benefit that his unmasking should not be delayed. The discharge of the rule was not to be taken as authorizing the *Daily Mail* to publish further and different charges against Factor up to the trial of the action, if it should be proceeded with.

The threatened libel action did not come into Court, and following the judgment in its favour the *Daily Mail*, in a leading article, said—

The real point involved in the motion was this: Whether it is permissible for a newspaper, in certain circumstances, to continue exposing a man whom it has previously exposed in its columns, notwithstanding the fact that the man has issued a writ for libel against the newspaper in respect of another matter. If the Court had not taken the view which it took yesterday, it would in effect have created a rogues' charter. . . . Factor's action for libel against the *Daily Mail* is still pending, and therefore that particular issue cannot be discussed as yet. But the whole case illustrates the duty of a great newspaper to the public, and the vastly extended range of activities which its discharge involves. From time to time the newspaper must take its courage in both hands, speak out plainly, and perhaps impugn big interests and individuals. It must be prepared to defend the interests of truth, and be ready to spend time and money lavishly resisting the attacks of those who seek to close its mouth by threatening actions or issuing writs.

### *A Publicity "Stunt"*

An issue of a totally different character was raised by the libel action brought by Mr. F. A. Mitchell Hedges, explorer, lecturer, author, and journalist, against the *Daily Express*, in 1928. Mr. Hedges said that on the night of 14th January, 1927, while he was travelling from London to Bournemouth, his car was "held up" on the Portsmouth road near Ripley, Surrey, the driver being bound and he and Mr. Edgell, his companion, being attacked and roughly handled. Later he found that the affair was a practical joke. The *Daily Express*, however, in articles published on 21st and 22nd January, 1927, said that the truth about the "battle on the Ripley road" was that it was



planned as a publicity enterprise for the identifying device known as the Monomark which was on an attaché case carried by Mr. Hedges and stolen by the "bandits," and that Mr. Hedges was a party to it. The defendants, with regard to the first of the two alleged libels, pleaded that the words complained of were true in substance and in fact. As for the second alleged libel, they said that the words complained of were not defamatory.

In summing up the Lord Chief Justice said—

It was common ground that some persons, towards the end of 1926, put their heads together to get a cheap advertisement for Monomarks. The scheme obviously was that a person whose name would attract some attention should appear to be waylaid on the public highway, and that it should be made to appear that there had been taken from him a bag containing things which were very valuable; and that afterwards, when the newspapers had given sufficient and satisfactory publicity to those matters and everybody was agog to know what had become of those valuable things, the bag should be produced—and produced because it bore the plaintiff's Monomark. Such a prank with an advertising purpose was no infraction of the criminal law. There were two versions of the attack. One was that it was made on the plaintiff because he had reflected on a certain lack of pluck, enterprise, and adventure in the youth of this country, and the youth of this country were determined to teach the plaintiff a lesson. That version held the field for some time, but they now knew perfectly well that it was not the true version. The true version was that it was a publicity "stunt" to get a cheap advertisement for Monomarks.

The special jury, without leaving the box, found for the defendants.

### *An Election Case*

In the excitement of an election, when political and personal issues often take a violent turn, newspapers have to steer a careful course, both in view of the law of libel and of special

election law. But here again newspapers have rights, and as an illustration I quote the case brought in 1927 by the late Mr. John Wheatley, M.P., against Mr. Alexander B. Anderson, printer and publisher of the *Eastern Argus*, Glasgow, and Mr. J. M. Reid Miller, of Glasgow, claiming against each £3,000 as damages for alleged slander contained in a letter written by Mr. Miller and published in the *Eastern Argus*. The case was heard in the Court of Session, Edinburgh.

The issues which the jury were asked to decide were—first, whether the letter was in whole or in part of and concerning the plaintiff and falsely and calumniously represented that the plaintiff was a man of dishonourable, crooked, and mean character to the loss, injury, and damage of the plaintiff; secondly, whether the said letter was in whole or in part of and concerning the plaintiff and falsely and calumniously represented that the plaintiff had no regard for the sanctity of an oath to the loss, injury, and damage of the plaintiff.

In his summing up Lord Murray said—

It was plain that they were concerned with a political dispute in which there had been engendered a good deal of heat on both sides. It was said that before, during, and after the election certain rumours were current in regard to matters which affected Mr. Wheatley, and the latter issued a challenge. They would probably agree that the challenge itself was couched in fairly vigorous terms. It was directed to Mr. Wheatley's opponents, including his chief opponent, Mr. Miller. It was couched in strong terms and referred to "traducers," "shameful methods," and "a campaign of slander and lies." They must read the reply in the light of the challenge. People who invited by public challenge inquiry or reply in regard to public matters must not be too thin-skinned. The reply was addressed to the editor of Mr. Wheatley's paper, but was not inserted,

as Mr. Wheatley considered that it went beyond the limits of fair comment in respect that it contained a personal libel upon himself. Mr. Miller then arranged to have the reply printed in the *Argus*. The reply also indulged in hard hitting. Reading the challenge and the reply together, was the reply defamatory? If it were in their opinion defamatory and libellous of the plaintiff, was it protected either as being fair comment or fair retort? The third question was whether, if the statement were defamatory and in that sense unfair, the plaintiff had in consequence of these statements sustained injury and damage, and, if so, to what extent.

The rule of Scots law in a civil case is that a verdict cannot be given before the expiry of three hours if the jury is not unanimous, but by consent of the parties it was agreed after the jury had been out for two and a quarter hours to take a majority verdict. The verdict of the jury was as follows: They found by a majority of nine to three in favour of both defendants on the first issue and unanimously in favour of both defendants on the second issue. Judgment was entered for the defendants.

### *Contempt of Court: Cases Cited*

With the growth of sensational journalism, and the increasing fondness of popular papers for the life stories of criminals, cases of contempt of court have multiplied rapidly in recent times. The Courts are taking a graver view of these offences, and there is talk at the present time of imprisonment instead of fines as the punishment. Sub-editors will have noted the facts of the cases which have been brought into Court; for the guidance of those who hope to join the sub-editorial ranks, in due course, I will put some of the chief points on record. I will omit names, as my purpose is to bring out principles.

Those who want to delve further can study the official law reports.

Not long after the War a member of an Irish league, said to be a branch of the Sinn Fein organization, was charged with being in possession of rifles at Brixton without a permit. A London paper published stories of a "huge Irish plot" and incorporated references to the charge mentioned. The Lord Chief Justice said the gravamen of the whole thing seemed to be that it was an invention of sensational matters. There was no doubt that certain statements made by the newspaper were not only inaccurate, but were invented. The reports were published while the man was before the magistrate, and the course of justice might have been prejudiced in the trial. The editor was fined £500 and the company £500, the costs being divided between the two. It was pointed out that the editor, who accepted the responsibility, suffered for the sins of the correspondent who invented the story.

### *"Criminal Investigation"*

The notorious Crumbles murder gave rise to three cases of contempt which threw a flood of light on the legal and judicial view of newspaper limitations. Fines of £300 were imposed in two cases, and of £1,000 in the other. Here are some extracts from speeches and judgment—

The Attorney-General said that on the very day when the rules were granted there appeared in the . . . a report of the proceedings headed "The Bungalow Mystery: Contempt of Court Alleged," and on page 5 of the same paper there was a full page headed "The Tragedy of Mrs. Patrick Mahon. Full

Story of Her Marriage Romance, by a Personal Friend," together with photographs of Mrs. Mahon, Patrick Mahon, and the dead girl, Miss Kaye. There appeared a long account of the married life of Mahon and his wife, but it was the publication rather than the actual words to which he (counsel) desired to direct attention.

The Lord Chief Justice.—What do you say is calculated to prejudice a fair trial?

The Attorney-General said that there was a fundamental principle of justice which was affected by all publications of any relevant matter during the course either of a trial or during the period in which the accused was under remand or arrest. It was impossible for any person to know to what extent the life story of an accused man, either in relation to his wife or in relation to any other person, might be even vitally relevant to the trial when it came on. It was not for a newspaper to make inquiries and publish matter of a sensational nature, and it was contempt of Court for any newspaper to make such inquiries with a view to publication.

Later, the Attorney-General said his contention was that it was contempt for any newspaper, when a man was under arrest, to make inquiries with the object of publishing facts which might be relevant to his trial.

The Lord Chief Justice, in his judgment, said—

It was apparent to the Court that the matters complained of were of such a kind as to be likely to interfere with the due administration of the criminal law. It was clear that cases of a similar kind to the present cases had recurred from time to time and had increased in number during recent years. One could not close one's eyes to what was done by the Press, and there seemed to be only too much ground for thinking that what was here complained of had come to be prevalent.

It was clear that some of these newspapers had entered deliberately and systematically on a course which was described by some of them as "criminal investigation." It was urged on behalf of one respondent on the previous day that it was part of the duty of a newspaper when a criminal case was pending to elucidate the facts. If he understood that suggestion when clearly expressed it came to something like this: that while the police of the Criminal Investigation Department were to pursue their investigations in silence and with all reticence and reserve, being careful to say nothing to prejudice the trial of the case, whether from the point of view of the

prosecution or the point of view of the defence, it had come to be somehow for some reason the duty of newspapers to employ an independent staff of amateur detectives, who would bring to an ignorance of the law of evidence a complete disregard of the interests whether of the prosecution or the defence. They were to conduct their investigation unfettered, to publish to the whole world from time to time the result of these investigations, whether they conceived them to be successful or unsuccessful results, and by so doing performing what was represented as a duty, and, one could not help thinking, to cater for the public appetite for sensational matter.

It was not possible for that Court, nor had it any inclination, to suggest to the responsible editors of those newspapers what were the lines on which they ought to proceed. Any such task as that was entirely beyond the province of that or any other tribunal. Those who had to judge by the results could see what a perilous enterprise this kind of publication was. It was not possible even for the most ingenious mind to anticipate with certainty what were to be the real issues, to say nothing of the more difficult question what was to be the relative importance of different issues in a trial which was about to take place. It might be that a date, a place, or a letter, or some other one thing which, considered in itself, looked trivial, might prove in the end to be a matter of paramount importance. It was impossible to speculate what was important.

His Lordship added that nobody who knew anything of the organization and management of a newspaper office could be ignorant of the fact that the work of newspapers was very often done in circumstances of great hurry by many different minds not always fully aware of what others might be doing. The result was a composite thing, but there must be central responsibility. It was impossible to say that men occupying responsible positions should be excused because they themselves were not personally aware of what was being done. The practice was nearly becoming prevalent, and it was quite obvious that there were those who thought that publications of this kind were not only legitimate, but even commendable. In the hope that that day's proceedings would show that in the opinion of that Court that view was entirely wrong, the Court had merely imposed a fine, but if the practice were repeated the Court would not again be disposed to adopt that merciful alternative.

### *A Photograph Case*

The first time that contempt proceedings were taken in respect of the publication of a photograph was in 1927. The cause of action against

two London papers was the publication of a photograph of Edgar William Smith, on the morning of the identification parade at which Smith, who had been committed for trial for the attempted murder of Police-constable Dainty, was put up for identification in connection with another charge which had been dismissed.

The Lord Chief Justice said that the phrase "contempt of Court," was, in relation to the kind of subject with which they were now concerned, a little misleading. The mischief consisted not in some attitude or supposed attitude to the Court itself, but in the prejudice to an accused person. It was not something which affected the status of the Court itself, but something which might profoundly affect the rights of citizens. What was now complained of was that when a man named Smith had been arrested on a charge of attempted murder and brought before the magistrates, and before those proceedings had been completed, those two newspapers printed photographs of the accused person.

After quoting cases on the question of the use of photographs by the police, the Lord Chief Justice proceeded—

No one would excuse a police officer if, bringing together all the persons among whom witnesses of identification might be found, he said: "I have arrested a man and am going to put him up for identification by you," and then showed them a photograph of the man they were going to be asked to identify, because, for one reason among others, the witnesses would approach the important, and it might be crucial, task of identification with the knowledge that that particular man had been arrested. The fact that publishing a photograph was done in a money-making business did not excuse a newspaper doing that which would be reprehensible in a police officer. In his opinion, in the publication of photographs no less than in the publication of news matter, it was the duty of a newspaper to take care lest prejudice should be caused to a man about to stand his trial. An attitude of cynical indifference was manifestly wrong.

By that he did not mean to lay down that a newspaper might never publish a photograph of a person who was a party to a civil or criminal proceeding; no one would dream of laying

down so wide a proposition. But he did say that there was a duty to exercise care in the publication of the photograph of an accused person. If a newspaper published a photograph in such circumstances it ran a grave risk—a risk which in one sense affected the accused person, and in another sense affected those responsible for the newspaper.

In the present case the attempt to murder took place on 7th January. Smith was arrested on 9th January and brought before the magistrates on 10th January. It was not till 13th January that the identification parade took place, and it was while that identification parade was still pending and before it had taken place, that those photographs appeared. Was it, or was it not, reasonably clear that a question of identity might arise? He thought that it was clear. It certainly was not clear that identity would not arise, and what the newspapers did was to take the risk.

It was quite true that when the identity parade took place only one person identified Smith; and it was quite true that later, on 27th January, when Smith was committed for trial his counsel said that the question of identity no longer arose; but that could not have been foreseen by those who published those photographs on 13th January. They ought to have seen that the question of identity might arise, and he thought that they had published matter which was not intended, but was calculated, to prejudice the fair trial of Smith.

In view of the fact that these were the first proceedings of the kind, the Court did not impose any penalty, but made absolute the rules and ordered the newspapers to pay the costs.

### *Risky Enterprise*

A weekly paper, after a man had been arrested and formally charged at the police station with the murder of a woman, published details about the career of the accused, some of them prejudicial to him. The editor was fined £500. The Lord Chief Justice gave the following warning—

A newspaper was entitled to report that which took place in open court as long as the report was fair and accurate, but here nothing had taken place in court, and there was no question of reporting proceedings in open court. The newspaper



busied itself in an enterprising fashion to ascertain, or at any rate to collect together, material which might be thought to be of interest concerning that which had been done by the person who it was expected would be accused. It was quite inconceivable that a newspaper of the old-fashioned type would ever dream of entering upon an investigation of this character. Once a newspaper in such cases departed from a fair and accurate report of that which was actually said in open court it was taking a great risk. He said nothing of the risk to itself, but it was really imperilling the unfortunate man, guilty or innocent, who might be charged or might hereafter be charged. It was a form of enterprise for which there was no conceivable excuse.

It could not be made too clear that when a newspaper went outside the task of faithfully reporting proceedings in a criminal case which had taken place in open court it incurred a grave risk, and in order to lend interest to its own issue it might be doing something which was grossly unfair to an individual. Here there were at least three statements of very grave prejudice about a man who was expected to be charged, who, it was said, might be charged on a day named—he had not yet been charged at that time—but who subsequently had been charged, and the statements referred to might or might not be true. If this kind of cynical indifference to the interests of an accused person continued to be displayed the case would not be met by the payment of a fine.

### *Truth No Excuse*

An editor was fined £1,000 for the publication of references to the story of a man the day after his arrest on charges of theft and uttering a forged cheque. It was pleaded in mitigation that an autobiography had just been published and had been largely reviewed, and that the matters complained of should be regarded in association with that book.

The Lord Chief Justice, giving the judgment of the Court, said—

The editor had sworn that he had been assured that the matter complained of came from a reliable source and was published in the belief that the facts were correctly stated, and reference was also made to the existence of an autobiography. The present proceedings, however, were not for damages for

libel. It was a question whether a contempt of Court had been committed. It was clear that after the arrest of the unfortunate man and before his trial statements, very manifestly to his detriment, were printed about him which certainly could not have been given in evidence at his trial unless he gave them in evidence himself. If a man of bad character were arrested and were going to be tried, the fact that he was of bad character afforded no excuse for the publication of that fact or of any facts to his detriment. Indeed, it might be said, without undue refinement, that if a man had a bad character even greater care should be taken not to prejudice the case against him. In the present case a newspaper with a notoriously enormous circulation published the paragraph complained of, which showed in the most unmistakable way that the wretched man had been previously convicted. A man might be very bad, but he was entitled to a fair trial and he was not to be prejudiced by his previous record, whatever it might be, unless it came out in the course of the proceedings.

"We think that it is of the utmost importance that it should be known that the fact, if fact it be, that statements to the detriment of an accused person are true affords not the slightest palliation or excuse for the publication of those statements before and with reference to the pending trial of that person for an offence."

### *"Scandalizing a Judge"*

The question of "scandalizing a judge" was involved in a contempt case arising from the publication of an article commenting on the decision of the Court of Appeal in the case of "*Rex v. Minister of Labour*," relating to the proposed institution of a Trade Board for "the catering trade." It contained the sentence: "Lord Justice Slesser, who can hardly be altogether unbiased about legislation of this type, maintained that really it was a very nice provisional order or as good a one as can be expected in this vale of tears." In his judgment, the Lord Chief Justice said—

"Scandalizing a judge" was contempt of Court where matter was published of a judge as such tending to bring him into

contempt or to lower his authority, but the same phrase "contempt of Court" was applied where that which was done was calculated to obstruct or interfere with the due course of justice, and the second category was undoubtedly more serious than the first. If newspapers published matter scandalizing a judge, that was undoubtedly contempt, but it was far more serious to publish matter tending to prejudice a criminal trial.

### *A "Printer's Error"*

Where it is made clear to the Court that offences charged against newspapers are the result of accident or carelessness, and not of deliberate intention, the Bench is always inclined to reduce penalties. One or two recent instances illustrate this. A London evening paper made a defendant plead guilty at Bow Street Police Court to a charge of forgery, whereas at that time the man had not been called on to plead. Counsel for the paper explained that the word "not" was omitted by the compositor. The original copy was produced. As the reporter wrote it it read: "—— again appeared at Bow-street." The sub-editor substituted the words "pleaded not guilty" for the words "again appeared," and struck out the sentence "He pleaded not guilty" a little later in the MS. The compositor's proof with the reader's corrections was also produced, and showed that the words "pleaded guilty" appeared for "pleaded not guilty," and that the reader did not correct the error. Counsel on the other side pointed out that as the charges made against —— were charges in respect of an indictable offence, the proceedings were in the nature of a preliminary investigation, and —— had not hitherto been called on to plead. To

say that he "pleaded not guilty" was as inaccurate as to say that he "pleaded guilty." The Lord Chief Justice said the Court did not suppose for a moment that there was any intention to prejudice the trial, but there was gross carelessness. Allowances must be made for the haste with which newspapers were prepared, but taking the most lenient course open to them they imposed a fine of £100 and costs.

Counsel was, of course, technically right in saying that there could be no plea of "Guilty" or "Not Guilty" at a police court in an indictable case; but it was rather belabouring the case against the newspaper, since in fact at the end of a preliminary hearing before a magistrate the accused when invited, before being committed for trial, to make a statement intimates, himself or through his advocate, that he will at the trial plead "Guilty" or "Not Guilty" as the case may be. The intention of the sub-editor—unfortunately frustrated by the compositor's omission of the "not"—was to bring out the fact that the accused denied the charge, and the publishing of such a denial could be no prejudice to him.

### *A Contents Bill Slip*

An admitted slip brought a London paper into Court in the Rouse case. At the time Rouse stood committed for trial at the Northampton Assizes on a charge of murdering an unknown man in a motor-car at Hardingstone, and he complained that a poster issued by the newspaper

containing the words "Another Blazing Car Murder" was calculated to prejudice his trial by suggesting that he was guilty of murder, whereas his defence throughout was that the man had met his death by accident through the car catching alight without any voluntary act on the part of any one. The poster in fact related to another case in the north of England in which it was alleged that a young woman was murdered in a blazing car. In an affidavit the editor declared that it did not occur to any one concerned that there was anything in the poster which could infringe the rule against prejudging a legal issue which was *sub judice*, but he and his staff now realized that it could be so interpreted. It was a slip, he said, which could only too easily be made in the exigencies of night publication. The Court decided that this was not a case for a penalty.

A provincial evening paper came successfully out of a case of alleged contempt in respect of police-court proceedings. A man was charged before the local magistrates and the complaint was that in the newspaper report of the police-court proceedings the following words appeared: "The case for the prosecution was borne out by the evidence," and "The Bench decided that the case was proved, and committed the defendant for trial at the next Quarter Sessions." Those words, it was contended, tended to create the impression that if the accused had not elected to go before a jury he would have been convicted by the magistrates, as the case had been proved. That was quite inaccurate.

The Lord Chief Justice, in stating that the rule would not be granted, said that the man in the street was an intelligent and sensible person. The newspaper had made slips by saying that the case for the prosecution had been "borne out" by evidence, instead of stating that it had been "supported," and that the bench held that there was a *prima facie* case for trial by a jury. Such mistakes, however, did not appear to be calculated to prejudice the trial of the accused, especially as any damage that might have been done would be dispelled by the publicity that the application would receive.

### *Pending Appeal*

When an accused person has been convicted of an offence at the Assizes, and has lodged an appeal, to what extent is a newspaper entitled to deal with his case by way of comment or story? Is the strict rule of silence that covers the period between arrest and trial applicable to the period between conviction and the decision of the Court of Criminal Appeal? These questions have caused some perplexity to editors, but if Lord Darling's speech in the House of Lords in April, 1931, is to be accepted as decisive, the only safe rule is silence during the pendency of an appeal. In that speech he dealt with the publication of "alleged confessions" by Rouse, in the blazing car murder case, after sentence of death but before the dismissal of the convict's appeal.

On the whole, said Lord Darling, the freedom of the Press was something which acted for the general good of society; yet freedom might be abused, and in the case to which he was calling attention he thought it was abused. The best form of liberty was what had been well called the liberty of wise restraint, and those newspapers showed the greatest wisdom which, in dealing with matters such as cases pending before the Courts, exercised the greatest amount of restraint. Certain papers entirely forgot their duty in that respect, and they not only published a great deal which it was inexpedient to publish while the case was before the magistrates and at the Assizes,

after conviction, and after appeal had been lodged by the convicted man, but they also published their views of what should be considered by the judges in coming to a conclusion as to allowing or dismissing the appeal.

[That the question is not clear of doubt was shown by the remarks of the Lord Chief Justice after he had given judgment against Rouse in the appeal. He said there had been, pending the appeal to the Court, a great deal of improper comment in certain newspapers and in letters to the members of the Court, including one from a person describing himself as a member of Parliament. They would have to consider whether proceedings of that kind pending an appeal did not constitute a contempt of Court.]

Lord Darling read the following letter which he had received from Lord Rothermere which he referred to as valuable confirmation of the view that there was nothing to the detriment of reputable newspapers in omitting comments of the nature of those he complained of in the Rouse case—

I am very interested in the subject of the debate that you are initiating to-day, and I wish that my business engagements permitted me to attend. I gather you are to raise, among other questions, the increasing tendency of certain newspapers to publish, particularly in respect of murder cases, the life story of the convicted person, notwithstanding that an appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal may be pending. Speaking for myself—and I am sure my personal view will be shared by the proprietors of all reputable newspapers—I would welcome an authoritative ruling that matters to the detriment of the convicted person should not be published until the time for lodging an appeal had lapsed, or, if an appeal was lodged, then not until the appeal had been heard.

The Lord Chancellor, replying to Lord Darling, said—

No one desired to limit the legitimate powers of the Press, and he doubted if it were possible to say that newspapers

could make no comment at all until the time for appealing had expired. But that was a consummation devoutly to be wished, and he welcomed the views of Lord Rothermerc, which Lord Darling had read. The position might be somewhat different when an appeal was entered, but whatever and whenever comment was made it must be reasonable and temperate in its terms and not such as to prejudice the accused's chances of appeal. It was due to the Press to say that in the majority of cases their powers were well and wisely used. Publicity might lead to the prevention of crime as well as its detection. Due allowance was always made by the Court for an unintentional, as distinguished from a deliberate offence. He would gladly give an assurance that, in the event of such articles as had been referred to appearing on a future occasion, they would be brought before the Court, so that the Court might have an opportunity of considering whether a contempt had or had not been committed. In his opinion a great evil at the present time was the marketing of sensational stories in connection with current criminal cases. It was not in the interests of justice nor of public morality that the sordid details of a criminal career should be spread abroad. Nowadays papers were read by young and old alike, and he ventured to appeal to the editors and proprietors of our great papers and ask them whether it was not desirable to discontinue the publication of such articles.

Commenting on Lord Hewart's remarks given on page 188, the *News Chronicle* wrote—

We are very glad that this matter has been raised. The present position of newspapers with regard to comment made after the verdict has been given and while the appeal is still pending is extraordinarily obscure and uncertain. This uncertainty makes the position of reputable newspapers in such cases (as Lord Hewart, an old journalist himself, will readily recognize) one of considerable difficulty and delicacy. It would be a relief to the whole Press to have the question settled once and for all. A definite ruling is badly needed.

The issue was raised again very clearly in the Kysant case. A jury at the Old Bailey found Lord Kysant, chairman of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, guilty of having published a deceptive prospectus, and Mr. Justice Wright sentenced him to 12 months' imprisonment in the second division. Notice



of appeal was given and the newspapers were faced with the problem of how far they could comment on a case of great public interest. In its leading article on the subject the *Daily Telegraph* said: "The intimation that this matter is to be the subject of an appeal precludes comment upon that aspect of a highly remarkable trial." Questions raised on other charges against Lord Kylsant and the auditor of the Company, on which both were acquitted, were, however, the proper subject of comment. They were of much importance to the business world, and, so far as this case was concerned, had been finally disposed of.

In dealing with reports of public inquiries where accusations are made against people, be careful to ascertain whether the proceedings come within privilege. A fair and accurate report may be given of a public inquiry by a Government official, say, for instance, by the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, into the affairs of a building society. Such an inquiry has a judicial character. If charges are levelled, be careful to give any reply that is made, even if it comes days after the allegation was uttered.

### *Copyright*

The elements of the law of copyright as applicable to newspaper practice should be understood by the sub-editor. Fortunately it is not so complicated as the law of libel. Occasionally questions arise as to the use of special articles from other newspapers or periodicals, or extracts from books. "Lifting" has its limits,

but the Copyright Act of 1911 declares that "any fair dealing with any work for the purpose of criticism, review, or newspaper summary" is not an infringement of an author's copyright. Wholesale appropriation of original literary work from other sources, without express permission, is not allowable. For instance, for a local paper hard-up for matter, to print bodily a leading article with an introductory sentence: "What does the — mean by this?" (as I am credibly informed has happened before now) would probably be held to be an infringement of copyright.

The lawyers tell us that there is no copyright in news, i.e. the actual event or information, but only in the form in which it is presented. The facts may be taken if told in a different literary form. Where skill and labour have been exercised in preparing a story the distinctive product has the protection of copyright, but the bare facts may be appropriated and presented in another way, if a newspaper on occasion desires to do so. In the absence of an agreement between the parties, however, a paper must not systematically copy articles or reports from another paper, in obtaining which money and organizing skill have been expended. Generally newspapers, to-day, which secure at considerable cost special features, such as the narratives of explorers, print a specific reservation of world copyright which has an international validity.

A case of particular interest to sub-editors was decided at the Coleraine Quarter Sessions.

in 1931. A free-lance journalist claimed damages from a newspaper for alleged infringement of copyright. His case was that he had supplied news items to various newspapers, and that these were lifted and published without payment to the plaintiff and without his authority in the defendants' paper. The plaintiff had admitted that all matter supplied by him to other newspapers had been sub-edited, and defendants' counsel submitted that once that was done the news appeared in a different form from that supplied by the plaintiff, and his copyright was gone. The plaintiff's counsel argued that the originality of the work was not lost by the mere fact that it was sub-edited.

The judge said he was satisfied that the plaintiff was not entitled to succeed for two reasons. Mr. Justice North had held that there was no copyright in news, but that there was in the particular form of language in which it was conveyed. The plaintiff in this case sent news to various papers, and the form of language in which the news was conveyed was that of the sub-editor who exercised his right as to the form in which it was to appear. The sub-editor, therefore, made himself responsible for it. He was satisfied it was not the original literary work produced by the plaintiff, and that he had no copyright in what had been published in the papers. He dismissed the case.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *THE AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT*

IN the evolution of journalism, America, the continent of bright ideas, has played a decisive rôle. The achievements of the "big boys" of the Western World may be broadly indicated as—

1. Enterprise in the organization of news collection, and skill and audacity in getting the news.

2. Elaboration of new styles of make-up and display.

3. Features, such as the column, the comic strip, the week-end budget, fiction, etc.

4. Sensational treatment of crime stories unhampered by the strict law of libel and contempt that applies in Great Britain.

5. Campaigns of exposure of municipal and commercial scandals.

6. A remarkably full service in the chief papers of foreign news.

There is no doubt that the sense of freedom in handling "dangerous" news, born of the legal laxity referred to, has given a certain character and force to American journalism that are missing in this country. Even in the "serious" newspapers the level of sensationalism is higher than here, but this does not involve anything offensive to decency in the great bulk of the American Press. The motto of the *New York Times* "All

the news that's fit to print" may be taken as the keynote in matters of sex. In the treatment of general news the methods known as "yellow" are much more questionable. They have been roundly and fiercely denounced by American authors. The term sprang from the "yellow kid," the name given to popular comic characters that figured in the sensational Pulitzer-Hearst newspaper duel in New York in the 'nineties. Nowadays the term is generally, and justly, used as one of opprobrium. While it is possible here to classify newspapers as either serious or sensational, "class" or "popular," the position in America is quite different. This point is dealt with by Mr. J. A. Spender in his book on "The America of To-day," where he says—

Like so much else in America, the American newspaper presents contrasts and combinations which to the English eye are in mutual conflict. A great newspaper may be both serious and sensational in the same number, serious in one part and sensational in another. On a certain day in January in 1927 the same newspaper contained a whole page of the Malines conversations on the reunion of the Roman and Anglican churches cabled verbatim from London, and another whole page profusely illustrated about the murderess then awaiting execution. An English journalist accustomed to think it a leading principle in the editing of newspapers that they should aim steadily at one kind of reader, asks in despair what kind of American reader can possibly desire both these items of news, or how any reader who desired the one could fail to be offended or bored by the other. The American editor apparently does not ask this question. He goes out after all sorts of readers at the same time and assumes, or hopes, that, if a reader dislikes or is bored by one part of the paper, he will be amused or interested by another part.

### *Crime Stories*

A reflection prompted by this diversity is that the sub-editors, or "copy-readers" as they

are called in America, must be men of wonderful versatility to be able to handle with equal readiness and skill a page about the Malines conversations and a page about the Snyder murder sensation; or perhaps it is a case of each man to his special work, as is the custom here in offices where discrimination is exercised in the allocation of jobs. The preparation of crime stories in America, especially in the "tabloids," is distinctive and characteristic. The whole procedure is alien to the British idea of the dignity and decorum of justice. A trial of national interest in America is "staged," in the literal sense. Hundreds of wires are installed in or about the Court; the place is adapted for the accommodation of an army of newspaper men, and the flashlight apparatus may be rigged up on the judicial bench itself. At the famous Hall-Mills trial in New Jersey—described as one of journalism's most celebrated murder mystery stories—there were over 200 reporters in attendance, one New York "tabloid" having sixteen men there. In the newspaper office the story dominated everything. Costly cablegrams from other parts of the world were thrown away to make space for the absorbing crime story. At the end of 24 days 12,000,000 words had been telegraphed from the Court to the newspapers.

In the English popular papers criminal trials of great interest are fully exploited, and the sub-editors' ingenuity in headlines is taxed to find fresh ideas for the continuations, sometimes over several pages, in banners and

column heads and cross-heads; but when these things are done on the vast scale fashionable in America the task is still more formidable to secure variety and the element of sustained sensationalism.

Mr. G. Binney Dibblee, writing from close personal knowledge of the American Press, examines in detail in his book, "The Newspaper," the organization of what he calls "the most expert news-gathering machine in the world—an American daily paper with, perhaps, an evening paper attached to it." The news "watchers," or "general workers" send in their work in fragments, often by telephone, and this matter passes into the hands of the "rewriters," or "telephone rewriters," who transform it into "story" form, which then goes to the copy readers. These men correspond partially to the English sub-editors, he says, but do not enjoy so much positive responsibility.

The functions of a copy-reader are unpleasantly negative. The real power of judging the news and criticizing it lies above with the city editor and the managing editor, officials only dimly shadowed in England. The copy-reader's duty is to suppress hopelessly incompetent stuff, to revise the results of carelessness, to add headlines and to correct all blunders. In addition he is the policeman of the office, cutting out the list of forbidden words, correcting spelling, and removing contradictions and obvious absurdities. There are no thanks coming to him either from above or below, and endless possibilities of reproof and disaster.

One American newspaper offers bonuses to the writer of the best story and to the "copy desk" for the best headline of the week. The latter is awarded by the vote of the room, the chief having a casting vote in case of a tie.

# The New York Times

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

WASHINGTON, April 13.—The Washington Post, which has been the only newspaper in the city to publish the names of the persons who have been arrested in connection with the recent strike, has been ordered to stop doing so. The order was issued by the United States marshal, who said that the publication of the names of the persons arrested was a violation of the law. The Post has refused to comply with the order, and the matter is now before the courts.

The United States marshal, who issued the order, said that the publication of the names of the persons arrested was a violation of the law. He said that the law required that the names of the persons arrested be kept secret, and that the publication of the names was a violation of this law. The Post has refused to comply with the order, and the matter is now before the courts.

THE WEATHER

At New York, N. Y., April 13, 1917. Clear, with a few clouds in the morning. Wind, light breeze from the north. Temperature, 60 to 70. Rainfall, .00.

At New York, N. Y., April 13, 1917. Clear, with a few clouds in the morning. Wind, light breeze from the north. Temperature, 60 to 70. Rainfall, .00.

"THE NEW YORK TIMES"

(G.2121)





*Big Papers: Small Circulations*

The freshness and originality of American journalism are the natural product of the intense vitality and restless energy of the nation. Crime work is only one phase and it would be false emphasis to pay too much regard to it. In handling the great stories of the world, of all kinds, the American Press is amazingly competent, and the huge issues printed give a scope denied to the smaller papers of this country. Circulations in America are limited to "metropolitan" areas; distances are too vast for transport to distribute national circulations, as is done in Great Britain, where papers are smaller and carriage to the farthest points is feasible. There is nothing here comparable with the mammoth issues of, for instance, the *New York Times*, which often has from 50 to 60 pages on an ordinary day, and perhaps 150 in its Sunday budget of sections. The maximum size of *The Times* is 32 pages, except when special supplements are issued; and a few other papers here occasionally equal it; but these are the nearest approach to the American records.

Comparing the *New York Times* with *The Times*, the first point to be noticed is that it has an eight-column page against a seven, although the type width of the page is 100 pica ems in each case. The *New York Times'* columns are 12 ems wide, and *The Times'* 14 ems. In a paper that loves balance in its make-up, an eight-column page is ideal. Looking at Plate XXIV it will be seen how this works. The two main

stories are double columns on the two "wings," beneath which are two cut-offs. Columns three and six have headings each of six "decks" and matched exactly in length and number of lines. The centre columns, four and five, are headed by a cut-off which forms a symmetrical feature, and beneath it again are two headings which are exactly balanced in depth and in detail. The principle of balance and symmetry is carried throughout the page, down to the two cut-offs at the bottoms of columns two and three, and columns six and seven, the type of the headlines again matching. A page of this character is the result of much careful planning and sub-editorial ability in preparation.

### *The "Narrative" Heading*

One of the distinctive features of the American method is what I may call the "narrative" heading, which covers not only the main theme, but is also in reality a summary of the whole story, the writing of which demands a close grip of all essential points. A hasty reader can get the whole pith and marrow in the heading, without reading the text. The condensed types employed enable the writers to cram a good deal in, and the freedom permitted in the use of verbs and tenses, of nouns as adjectives, and of forms of phrasing that are forbidden in many British offices, gives infinite scope and variety. The *New York Times* is a real work of art—in its sub-editing, its typography, and its make-up. Compared with many of its contemporaries it is conservative and dignified. The total effect

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# Chicago

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Chinese Laundrymen Strike  
for 12 Hr. Day. \$36 Month

**Daily . . . 805,000**  
**Sunday . . 1,070,000**

Зупини Т

Quentin Roosevelt Goes  
Under Anile in Porto Rico

**Let's Trap for Burglars;  
Walks Into It Himself**



of its pages, aided largely by trim black upper- and lower-case cross-heads, is one of extreme neatness. In the left "ear" of the page shown appears the famous motto, and in the right the day's weather.

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Plate XXV) affords a big contrast in many ways. The effect is bolder and more sensational. The page size and the number of columns are the same as in the *New York Times*. In neither is to be found the black type in introductions so much in vogue in British pages, nor is the method of indentation for emphasis used to any extent. The *Tribune* carries two protuberant "ears" and beneath its title the unqualified claim, "The World's Greatest Newspaper." The great feature of the page is, of course, the bold black banner "Spain a Republic; King Flees." The type used, a great sans, is undeniably effective, although open to the criticism that it verges on the poster style of display. Some American papers appear to think that the title is of minor importance compared with the news, for it is often almost obscured by heavy type above, at the sides, and beneath it.

The policy of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* is that of going "all out" on the chief story. The tops under the banner are set in a good readable sans, in character with the banner. The type and construction of the headings are quite different from those of the *New York Times*. The three principal headings are matched in size, with three top lines of sans caps, and secondary turning lines in the upper and lower case of a clear-faced type. There is much less detail in the

headings and the limits of size and type involve drastic compression of story points. The News Summary column, written in the historic present, and carefully classified in subject divisions, is an excellent piece of work. The cartoon and the weather are features, and there is only one "continuation," as against seven "jumps" in the *New York Times'* page. The *Tribune* retains wide measure columns (16 ems) on its leader page, as does *The Times* (London), but four of the columns are narrow, giving a curious composite page.

### *Chicago Outdone*

An interesting comparison is furnished between the *Tribune* page and Plate VIII. The *Daily Express* leaves the American paper far behind in the boldness and novelty of its display of the abdication story. On the other hand the *New York Times* of the same day (15th April, 1931) contents itself with a much more subdued make-up. Its Spanish story was kept within the four right-hand columns of the front page (which is deemed in America to be the position of honour), the banner lines being—

*KING ALFONSO QUILTS, SPAIN A REPUBLIC:*

*ALCALA ZAMORA IS FIRST PRESIDENT,*

*NATION ORDERLY UNDER MARTIAL LAW*

Beneath the banner was a double-column picture of the King, and in this detail the display was an improvement on that of the *Tribune*. On this date the *New York Times'* issue extended to 56 pages.

By way of contrast let me give the headings  
in *The Times* (London) on King Alfonso—

(15TH APRIL)

## **FALL OF KING ALFONSO**

**DEPARTURE FROM  
MADRID**

**PROCLAMATION OF A  
REPUBLIC**

**FULL STORY**

!

(16TH APRIL)

## **A MANIFESTO TO SPAIN**

**KING ALFONSO'S  
POSITION**

**NO RENUNCIATION  
OF RIGHTS**

**ROYAL FAMILY'S  
JOURNEY**



I give the two headings because they illustrate exactness in recording news. The Madrid correspondent in his first message said that the question as to whether the King had abdicated was doubtful. Hence, the caution in the heading; whereas most other papers plumped for abdication. The reserve shown by *The Times* was justified next day, when Alfonso's manifesto made it plain that he had not renounced any rights, but awaited the judgment of his country. The truth is good enough in a heading, and, after all, "fall of" is as effective as "abdication."

### *Seventy Years Ago*

Although the American people have abiding links with British ancestry, such as language and common law, their main achievement as we see it to-day is the fruit of independent growth. When the Pilgrim Fathers left these shores over three centuries ago there were no indigenous newspapers in England—only a few corantos from the Continent which had not attained any firm status. So the pioneers of the New World developed their Press entirely on their own lines, and a comparison of the various stages of newspaper growth reveals distinguishing marks of racial characteristics. This might well be the subject of research; within the scope of this book I can only make this passing allusion. It may, however, be of interest to give one or two sample headings to indicate the line of development, for headings, as I remark elsewhere, are an index of character. Take

THE AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT 203

three specimens from periods of critical importance in the middle of the last century. They speak for themselves—

(*New York Times*, 17TH AUGUST, 1858)

**THE OCEAN TELEGRAPH.**

---

**VICTORY AT LAST!**

---

**THE FIRST MESSAGE.**

---

**ENGLAND GREETES AMERICA**

**QUEEN VICTORIA**

TO

**PRESIDENT BUCHANAN.**

**THE PRESIDENT'S REPLY.**

**TRIUMPHANT COMPLETION**

OF THE

**GREAT WORK OF THE CENTURY.**

**The Old World and the New United.**

**GLORIA IN EXCELSIS.**

(*New York Times*, 4TH APRIL, 1865)

**G R A N T.**  

---

**R I C H M O N D**  
**A N D**  
**V I C T O R Y !**

**The Union Army  
in the Rebel  
Capital**

**Rout and Flight of the Great  
Rebel Army from Richmond.**

**Jeff. Davis and His Crew  
Driven Out.**

**Grant in Close Pursuit of Lee's  
Routed Forces.**

**Richmond and Petersburg in Full  
Possession of Our Forces.**

**ENTHUSIASM IN THE REBEL CAPITAL.**

**The Citizens Welcome Our Army with  
Demonstrations of Joy.**

**RICHMOND FIRED BY THE ENEMY**

**Our Troops Save the City from  
Destruction.**

**THE EVACUATION OF PETERSBURGH.**

(*New York Times*, 15TH APRIL, 1865)

## **AWFUL EVENT.**

### **President Lincoln Shot by an Assassin.**

**The Deed Done at Ford's  
Theatre Last Night.**

### **THE ACT OF A DESPERATE REBEL**

**The President Still Alive at  
Last Accounts.**

**No Hopes Entertained of His  
Recovery.**

---

**Attempted Assassination of  
Secretary Seward.**

### **DETAILS OF THE DREADFUL TRAGEDY.**

These three headings were in single column. In vigour of language and adequacy of point they stand well against their modern counterpart. They naturally seem a little quaint, and the definite article is used much more liberally than would be permitted nowadays.

To make our comparisons complete, now look

at the heading which the *New York Times* printed at the end of the Great War (11th Nov., 1918). Here is the quadruple banner, full page width—

***ARMISTICE SIGNED, END OF THE WAR!  
BERLIN SEIZED BY REVOLUTIONISTS;  
NEW CHANCELLOR BEGS FOR ORDER;  
OUSTED KAISER FLEES TO HOLLAND***

The main subsidiary heading, a double column at the right of the page, was—

## **WAR ENDS AT 6 O'CLOCK THIS MORNING**

**The State Department in Washington  
Made the Announcement at  
2:45 o'Clock.**

### **ARMISTICE WAS SIGNED IN FRANCE AT MIDNIGHT**

**Terms Include Withdrawal from Alsace-Lorraine  
Disarming and Demobilization of Army and  
Navy, and Occupation of Strategic  
Naval and Military Points.**

The whole page is devoted to the Armistice and related events, and there are four other headings and two boxes. It is clear from the earlier headlines printed above that the "narrative" form is a tradition with the *New York Times*.

Reference has already been made to the huge

## THE AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT 207

Sunday issues favoured in America. They are so vast that the wonder is how any one can find time to read them—probably no one does. The interests of readers are divided into sections, as shown in the following tables of two leading papers of the same date, 2nd August, 1931—

### “NEW YORK HERALD-TRIBUNE”

Section	Subject	Number of pages
1.	Late City Edition . . . . .	20
2.	Editorials: farm and gardening, foreign news, politics, schools . . . . .	12
3.	Sports . . . . .	10
4.	Science . . . . .	6
5.	Finance and business . . . . .	8
6.	Real estate . . . . .	6
7.	Society, fashions, travel . . . . .	16
8.	Drama, music, screen, art . . . . .	6
9.	Gravure in two parts . . . . .	16
10.	Comics in colour . . . . .	8
11.	Books . . . . .	16
12.	Magazine . . . . .	24
13.	Classified advertisements, marine . . . . .	6
Total pages . . . . .		154

### “NEW YORK TIMES”

1.	News . . . . .	26
2.	Second news . . . . .	16
3.	Education, Letters to Editor . . . . .	8
4.	Books . . . . .	24
5.	Magazine . . . . .	24
6.	Rotogravure (1) . . . . .	8
7.	“ (2) . . . . .	8
8.	Screen, drama, music, travel . . . . .	16
9.	Science, art . . . . .	12
10.	Sports, shipping, mails . . . . .	12
Total pages . . . . .		154

In each case the book and magazine sections are in folio size.

*Standardized Technique*

There is standardization of technique in both England and America. In England it may be traced to the development of "chain" papers, subject to centralized control, which imposes main ideas on all. In America there are, of course, huge groups, but the divergencies in local policies are more marked, and standardization is largely due to the great spread of schools of journalism, and the building up of a body of textbooks on all the departments of the journalistic craft. Universities, colleges, and even high schools and academies all over the States teach journalism and the number of graduates yearly is great and growing. There are discussions and differences as to the practical value of the teaching, and the possibility of making journalists in schools (we are familiar with the same dispute in this country), but the fact remains that the students who pass through the courses find employment in considerable numbers on newspaper staffs. The teachers of journalism, scattered all over the States, are organized, and there is a constant interchange of ideas. This process tends inevitably to the standardization of instruction in technique according to the highest ascertained level of attainment. The University of Missouri has the distinction of being the pioneer; it had the first university school in the world offering a degree in journalism, established in 1908. Thirty years before that it was providing courses in journalism. Soon after Missouri started Mr. Pulitzer endowed

his school at Columbia University, New York. On varying scales courses appeared in many places to such an extent that in 1912 the American conference of Teachers of Journalism was organized, and bulletins are now regularly issued by associations of schools and departments and teachers. What was an experiment, when Dean Walter Williams began his courageous pioneer work at Missouri, has become an established and prosperous reality, and the process of development has been watched with interest by the whole world of journalism. London University trains students for its diploma for journalism, and other countries have their teaching systems, but America led the way and has, of course, gone further. Some of its bigger schools actually produce their own newspapers—a valuable means of practical training.

The *Journalism Quarterly*, "devoted to investigative studies in the field of journalism," published by the Association of Schools and Departments of Journalism and the American Association of Teachers of Journalism (Iowa City, Iowa), is proof of the keen and far-reaching outlook to which I have alluded. The current issue (Vol. VIII, No. 2), when this book first appeared, included: "The Comparative Size of the Journalism Field," by George Turnbull, of the University of Oregon; "Contemporary Regulations of the British Press," by Frederick S. Siebert; a bibliography of articles related to journalism, November, 1930, to February, 1931; book reviews and news notes.



Mr. Turnbull's article is an interesting statistical study. The 1920 census of the United States showed 228,630 persons as engaged in the manufacture of newspapers and periodicals. Included in this total were 108,249 "purely journalistic workers," equal to 102 per 100,000 of the population. This compared with 115 lawyers and 142 physicians and surgeons. As to the annual recruiting for journalism he says—

If it is reasonable to assume an average forty-three-year career for newspaper people, the 108,249 positions in the general journalistic field would absorb one forty-third of this number, or about 2,500 beginners, on the average, yearly. This, apparently, is about the maximum that should be turned out by the schools and departments of journalism if their graduates are to occupy the field—as, in time, probably they will—to the practical exclusion of those who began with no college journalism training.

"Copy-reading" is one of the chief subjects in the American curricula. Columbia gives practical training in reading copy, writing headlines, the exercise of news judgment, and the display of news with reference to make-up. It confers the degrees of B.Lit. and of Master of Science in Journalism. The requirements for the major degree include "a substantial article of not less than 15,000 words on a journalistic subject." Missouri issues, in its excellent series of bulletins, a deskbook which is a model of practical and detailed instruction in all branches of work. The influence of such a book must be in the direction of standardization. American teachers do not make extravagant claims. The courses, it is maintained, rub the raw edges off recruits and help materially to give them a favourable start in actual newspaper

work ; but that work, it is admitted, still has its hard practical lessons to teach. None the less the "laboratory work" of the University school is a real preparation.

### *Copy-reading Syllabus*

Appended is a syllabus outline compiled mainly from courses in copy-reading offered at Missouri, Illinois, and Syracuse, which is stated to be "typical of those courses which limit 'news editing' more nearly to the duties and responsibilities of the man known in British newspapers as the 'sub-editor.'"

1. The Place of the Copy-reader in Newspaper Organization—  
The progress of news from reporter to reader.
2. Deskbooks and Style Sheets—  
Sentence clarity and forcefulness in writing.  
Bad taste in news writing.  
Desirability of uniformity in usage.
3. Exercise in Copy-reading—  
Mistakes most commonly found in copy.  
Applied grammar.
4. Headline Writing—  
The mechanics of head writing.  
Getting ideas most effectively into type.  
Defective headlines ; headline faults.  
Varieties of headlines.
5. Rewrites and Follow Stories—  
"Trimming to space."  
Expanding a story.  
Writing effective leads.
6. The Newspaper and the Law—  
Protective wording against libel.
7. Newspaper Ethics—  
The copy-reader as a constructive force.
8. Newspaper Make-up—  
Sending sectional stories to press.  
Assembling long stories ; telegraph stories.  
Handling editions ; changes in news values.  
Front, editorial, sport, feature pages.  
Problems of display, illustration and typography.
9. Editing Special Departmental Material, Magazines, and  
Small Publication Work.

*The Eagle Eye*

There is one experience that is common to editorial staffs both in America and England, and that is the constant scrutiny of the eagle eye of the wandering millionaire proprietor. Telegraph and telephone give proof of a constant watchfulness, if the proprietor, as is sometimes the case, is a practical journalist. Mr. Winkler tells us that William Randolph Hearst even in his "experimental period," when he was making a success of the San Francisco *Examiner*, almost daily sent pages of direction and advice to his sub-editors, all in his own handwriting, written late at night. The sub-editors are often in the line of fire of the proprietorial thunderbolt, because they are concerned with display and make-up, which are among the most potent weapons of the new journalism. The biographers of Lord Northcliffe, Joseph Pulitzer, and James Gordon Bennett all tell the same story.

One of the chief figures in the great journalistic duel of "Hearst v. Pulitzer," Mr. Arthur Brisbane, has propounded many interesting theories of journalism. It is said that he earned at least £50,000 a year, which easily made him the highest paid journalist in the world. "In a busy nation," he says, "the first necessity is to attract attention. The big store window wasting space and the big type apparently wasting space are necessary features of quick development. I am not sure it is good that regularity in make-up should compel big headlines on trivial pieces of

news. But I observe that Nature puts on the bodies of trivial men heads of about the average size. Nature, apparently being incapable of supplying the world with enough great men, observes uniformity in the headlines or headpieces to atone for much inferiority. And the editor, for the sake of uniformity, is justified in imitating Nature and making up with big headlines for the lack of a sufficient supply of big stories."

How highly the importance of make-up is assessed is illustrated by a little story of Mr. Hearst, who one night entered the composing room and looked over the first page. He said the story they were playing second was really more interesting than the first, and suggested a re-make. "I agree with you," said the make-up man, "but I am afraid there is no time to reset." Hearst smiled, pushed the whole forme off the stone, making a pile of pied type, and asked "Now, is there time to reset?" He added: "There is always time to make a thing better." The hectic battle between Mr. Pulitzer and Mr. Hearst for supremacy in New York, which Mr. Seitz calls "the most extraordinary dollar-matching contest in the history of American journalism," did more than anything else to incite the newspapers to those extravagances of typographical Bolshevism which have characterized the Press of the United States.

Last year Mr. W. R. Hearst, junior, was in London, and in an interview he said: "Headlines in British newspapers do not tell the story. About the only paper that is easy for me to

read here is the *Daily Express*. Its front page is more like our papers at home. I think most of the British papers are inclined to be too sedate in their headings. Even an occasional touch of humour seems to be banned."

### *A Conservative Tendency*

It is not surprising to find that there are, in responsible quarters in America, tendencies to a return to more restrained methods. I find myself in agreement with Mr. Walter Lippmann, formerly editor of the *New York World*, in his criticism of the fashions of the "popular" Press. After the 1914-18 War he foresaw a revolution in journalism, dating from "the profound revolution among educated people and among newspapermen themselves at the orgy of lying which the war propaganda let loose."

This type of journalism is not, I believe (says Mr. Lippmann) enduring. It contains within itself the seeds of its own dissolution. For its actuating principle is to attract daily the most vivid attention of a large mass. Its object, therefore, is not to report events in their due relationships or to interpret them in ways that subsequent events will verify. It selects from the events of the day those aspects which most immediately engage attention, and in place of the effort to see life steadily and whole it sees life dramatically, episodically and from what is called, in the jargon of the craft, the angle of human interest. This is highly effective—for a while. But the method soon exhausts itself. When everything is dramatic, nothing after a while is dramatic; when everything is highly spiced, nothing after a while has much flavour; when everything is new and startling, the human mind just ceases to be startled. But that is not all. As the readers of this press live longer in the world, and as their personal responsibilities increase, they begin to feel the need of being genuinely informed rather than of being merely amused and excited. Gradually they discover that things do not happen as they are made to appear in the human interest stories. The realization begins to dawn upon them that they have been getting not the news but

a species of romantic fiction which they can get much better out of the movies and the magazines. I think I am not mistaken in believing that the popular press has a transient circulation, that its readers pass through it on their way to maturity, and that it can continue to prosper on its original pattern only while there is a continuing supply of immature readers who have not yet felt the need of something else.

As time goes on, therefore, one of two things happens to the popular commercial press. If its owners lack foresight and energy and know only how to repeat the original formulae, the newspaper gradually fails. If, on the other hand, they understand the nature of the process I am describing, they gradually transform the paper itself, making it more and more sober, less and less sensational, increasingly reliable and comprehensive. In the extreme case, even of tabloid journalism in New York, one can see the growing respectability of the successful one and the steady degeneration of the disreputable one.

In harmony with this outlook was the award by the School of Journalism of the University of Missouri of a medal of honour to the *Manchester Guardian* for distinguished work in journalism. In conferring the award, Dr. Williams said the *Guardian* merited it "for defining by unremitting practice for the profession everywhere the journalistic virtues of reliability and authority; for its brilliant battle for liberalism; for sympathetic understanding of the points of view of other people and other nations; for its courageous fight for peace; and for its sensitiveness to moral ideals." The editor of the *Guardian*, Mr. E. T. Scott, in accepting the distinction as one he prized, said: "The essential qualities of good journalism are the same everywhere, and despite striking differences in appearance provided by American and British newspapers, there is no doubt that, for the most part, these differences cover the underlying unity of aim."

One instance of "good journalism" in America may be mentioned in closing this chapter. It is typical of many that show how events of world-wide interest are adequately covered. Professor Einstein in 1931 delivered the Rhodes lectures at Oxford, his subject being "The Theory of Relativity." Such lectures are difficult even for experts to digest. They were delivered in German. *The Times* published an explanatory summary, which spoke of the impossibility of following Einstein's detailed exposition without a knowledge of the "very difficult mathematics." The *New York Times* had a special full translation cabled on the Saturday night for its big issue of the following day. This is an example of the money and labour expended by the more serious American newspapers in dealing with such matters as politics, high finance, exploration, antiquities, and science.

## CHAPTER IX

### *THE RAW MATERIAL*

I MAKE no apology for closing this book with a chapter on what has been truly described as the raw material of journalism—News. What is News? It seems an elementary question, but it is in reality a provocative one. Every journalist who thinks about the fundamentals of his work will have a theory and an opinion to offer. There is no one answer among the many that have been given that will fit the whole case, for journalism is a thing of infinite variety, appealing to different classes, whose outlook, interests, and tastes are sometimes as far as the poles asunder. I almost said that there is no common denominator in news, but that would need qualification. There are some events that interest and concern all people and which undeniably possess absolute news value, seizing the attention of everybody to the exclusion of all other matters for the time. Such events are not of frequent occurrence, and on many, if not most, days, the world's happenings are mainly of sectional interest, and selection and display vary greatly in papers of different categories. But all newspapers must have news. They may run the most brilliant features and stunts, but their bread of sustenance is news. In the final issue it is not what Fleet Street wants and thinks, but what the great public requires, that



determines success or failure. There is no doubt about the public need of news. When the newspapers were momentarily crippled by the General Strike the Government saw the necessity of news in print (for broadcasting by wireless does not meet the case) and issued the *British Gazette*. True it was a poor substitute for the real thing, but its appearance was a proof that news is an essential of organized society. It follows that the papers that give the most news best meet the public need.

News values are infinite in gradation, and sub-editorial staffs, in common with news rooms, have to assess them according to the policy and standard of their papers. In a popular newspaper the elements of value in order of importance have been stated as follows: Drama; comedy (not farce); sex (within limits); mystery; money (the small investor); the romance of science; religion (growing interest among young people); personalities (the human touch); sport; politics (once described as the bane of every night-editor in Fleet Street). On such a category as this it is perfectly possible to produce differing types of papers—the one kind reliable and responsible, as well as interesting, and the other exhibiting all the vagaries of jazz journalism. - The masses of news pouring into an office may be converted into the one or the other by sub-editorial treatment. The trouble is that important news is often dull, and to be dull is a capital crime in most papers. Hence, when it comes to a choice between League or Lido, the Lido generally wins. A

little while ago the Bishop of Ely told a journalist that he was hurt because discussions at his Diocesan Conference of affairs of world-wide interest were not much noticed in the London papers. The journalist replied: "The papers do not care very much for that kind of thing. If you were to stand on your head on the platform, however, you would be in all the London papers."

### *The Abnormal*

This gay retort probably shocked the Bishop, but it points to the fact that the abnormal, the fresh and the novel are high in the scale of news values. Even in local papers, which have to subsist largely on the bread and butter of ordinary routine things, there is every effort to make the fare more appetising by emphasizing the unusual. News, said Lord Northcliffe, is anything out of the ordinary. For example, in an average street of one hundred houses, ninety-nine will be occupied by respectable families—model husbands, devoted wives, and ordinary children. But the hundredth is abnormal, provides a divorce, a crime, triplets, or some other claim to notoriety, and at once "gets into the news." A simple illustration is to be found in one of the prosaic tasks of the sub-editor's room, i.e. sorting out the police-court and inquest copy. Ninety per cent of this is generally quite worthless because it presents no points of interest and records merely customary fines and sentences, and the common tragedies of the Coroner's Court. The remaining 10 per cent

has a claim to print because of some point of novelty or humour or pathos, or because a case has a general application. In my reporting days I once had to cover a London by-election, one of the candidates in which had a quite exceptional power of repartee. The heckling times were by far the most interesting "news" in the contest; so instead of reporting the platitudes of the speeches I devoted myself to the lively scenes that followed. One such story was appropriately headed "The Voice" and consisted entirely of question and answer, verbal thrust and parry. But it is still true that the complete newspaper takes note of the routine things of life, because it is with these we have to "carry on" in the intervals between the high sensations. Where journalistic enterprise comes in is in discovering real news in unlikely places, in finding interesting turns to humdrum stories, and in exploring new fields of virgin soil. The march of progress is so rapid that news horizons are always expanding. These opportunities are fully exploited in America. The Hearst newspapers, with more than twenty million readers, claim to be "the greatest carriers of the commodity of news the world has ever seen." Their definition of news is worth noting—

Eager, restless, ambitious America has one great, dominating passion—*it wants to know!* Whatever happens—wherever it happens—America must know, and know at once. Everything great, everything vital—it must know, but it must know lesser things too. It must know if a Balkan king slips from his tottering throne, but it must also know what took place yesterday in its home town—who died, who was married—all the thousand and one things that go to make up the budget of a day's news. Everything that happens, everything that is

done or said or thought, must be known. This eager, healthy curiosity, this desire to know, this eternal search for new, full light on every subject, dominates America. It has made America what it is. It developed America—discovered its gold and coal and oil—harnessed its electricity—founded its cities and schools—made its farms—built its factories.

Mr. Gerald W. Johnson, of Baltimore, sets a good many fine hares running in his essay on "What is news?" No one, he argues, has yet discovered the absolute in news, for "news depends upon innumerable factors of all but infinite variation." He says it is futile to hope to set up an objective standard that may be applied anywhere and at any time.

What was news yesterday is not news to-day, but may be news again to-morrow. What is news in Moscow is junk in New York, and what is news on 120th Street may well be dead stuff in Washington Square. Nevertheless, it would be preposterous to assume that newspaper workers have no standards, and that they are incapable of formulating any. On the contrary, every managing editor has a set of his own, as the city room knows to its cost; and every worker, from the rawest cub up, possesses his private, individual set, which he is eager to defend against the world.

In the course of his interesting excursions on this subject Mr. Johnson describes as the most fascinating phase of newspaper work the discovery of news where no one had suspected its existence. A sub-editor on a weekly paper controlled by Lord Northcliffe was once sharply awakened from his inability to recognize news. One Saturday night, the late Mr. F. A. Mackenzie tells us in his book on Lord Beaverbrook, a message came through on the tape that Colonel Cody, an American who had been generally looked upon up to that time with amusement by serious folk, had succeeded in raising himself in a primitive

flying machine over a hedge from one field to another at Aldershot. The message had barely been read when Northcliffe asked on the telephone what was being done with "this Cody story." The sub-editor hardly knew, but the quick direction came: "Splash it. Splash it over a page and a half if you like. Don't you realize, my boy, that this is the most important event that has happened in our time? This is the beginning of human flight." So it proved to be. But Northcliffe was an enthusiast in aviation; the sub-editor was not. It was a case of "spotting" big news in an apparently trivial setting.

### "Talking Points"

"Talking points" are news. Macnair Wilson records that in the days when Northcliffe and Kennedy Jones were putting the *Evening News* on its feet, they aimed every day to seize upon such points. If I give yet another quotation about Northcliffe it is because a study of his principles and methods is of the highest value to young journalists—

What was it in the day's news, Harmsworth would ask, that men and women returning from business were likely to discuss? The "talking point" idea cut clean through the ancient traditions. For, while to-day the "talking point" might be a speech by Lord Rosebery, the new Liberal Prime Minister, to-morrow it would be the Derby or Ascot, or a divorce case, or a murder trial, or a fresh attempt to reach the North Pole, or the discovery of a cure for some disease, or a Royal procession, or a rumour of war. The old journalism had had its traditions—and editors and politicians dictated them. It was the public who dictated the "talking points." The real editor of the *Evening News* was not Alfred Harmsworth but the people of London. There, I think, is the fundamental difference between the newspapers of yesterday and the newspapers of



"JOURNALISM IN OUR TIME."  
 THE BIG BOY: "DON'T LET'S WASTE TIME WITH NEWS, WHO'S GOT A NEW COMPETITION IDEA?"  
 A CARTOON PUBLISHED IN THE "DAILY EXPRESS" DURING ITS CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE  
 COUPON PAY-TO-ENTER COMPETITION AS A METHOD OF CIRCULATION-RAISING



to-day. And there, too, I think, is Harmsworth's secret. His enemies, when his success became assured, accused him of "playing down" to the public; as usual they misunderstood. His attitude was that the public had a right to be interested in anything in which it chose to be interested. He did not dispute that interest; on the contrary, he tried to discover it.

Since those days the keenest of the exponents of "up-to-date" journalism have not been content to discover "talking points"; they have created them by stunts and campaigns and crusades. This has been pushed to such lengths that the public is becoming frankly sceptical and cynical about some of the things it sees in print. When honest straightforward news is either ignored or distorted to some partisan end, the discriminating reader becomes suspicious, and those newspapers which, true to an honourable tradition, give fair and impartial reports in their news columns, and reserve comment and criticism for their "views" columns, gain in public favour. But, unhappily, the transgressions, like the sin of Adam, involve the whole race in the consequences. The two different schools of journalism have been aptly defined by Mr. Rupert Beckett, chairman of the company that controls the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Leeds Mercury*—

There are many newspapers that treat every item of news from the standpoint as to whether it will interest, if it does not thrill (a favourite word with this section of the Press), the great mass of their readers. A news editor of such a journal will reject everything that does not come up to his general standard of popular news interest. But these newspapers are not complete newspapers. *The Yorkshire Post* is in line with those journals, and I am thankful to say there are many left, that take as their test of news selection the criterion of broad public interest. Subjects that appeal only to the more intelligent and public-spirited classes of the community are treated as fully—



often more fully—in the columns of *The Yorkshire Post* than the more sensational news. Proceedings in Parliament, matters affecting the great trades of the country, the affairs of our Empire and the policies of other nations with their reactions to the policy of this country, education, art, literature, sport, and many other subjects are treated by well-informed writers. The man or woman who wishes to be well informed, as is the desire of every educated person, can only be catered for in a newspaper that gives as complete a survey as possible of such matters. I believe that the newspapers that follow such a policy are essential to the welfare of the country, especially this country, which possesses a democratic Government based on the widest possible franchise. The people cannot use the vote intelligently unless they have an opportunity of considering all the facts presented without prejudice, as they are presented in the leading papers in this country. I hold that such newspapers are necessary to good government and sane progress.

### *An Arraignment*

An outspoken attack on the methods of the “popular Press” is made by Mr. George Blake in his pamphlet “The Press and the Public.” He traces what he terms the “process of vulgarization” and the decline of our journalistic standards, back to the discovery that the public prefers “tit-bits to solid fare, headlines to descriptions, sensation to facts,” which led to the foundation of the “popular Press,” and the “ferocious competition for circulation.” The leading article, he maintains, has lost its power in this section of the Press to influence the people, and appeals to the electorate in political matters are “made much more effectively in the sub-editor’s room. . . . Policies are made by those whose business it is to arrange, select, and present the tidings of the day. A newspaper can and does most effectively influence the public by its method of handling news.”

No honest journalist can look back without shame, he says, on the suppressions and emphases of the *British Gazette* during the General Strike. In handling the news sub-editors have "three weapons of distortion: Selection, Emphasis, and Suppression." Although Mr. Blake is careful to acquit the "sober-sided" newspapers of these crimes, he evidently fears their active perpetration elsewhere. Opinions will differ as to the extent of the evils he arraigns, but his protest throws a strong light on the importance of the functions of the sub-editor.

In his pungent little piece of satire "Rules for the conduct of newspaper editors with respect to politics and news" (with the sub-head "wisdom for the wicked") Leigh Hunt in his *Examiner* in 1808, dealing with "invention in news," wrote: "If your favourite statesman is in office, it is your business to announce nothing but victories; if he is out, conquest must vanish with him. . . . With talents for disputation, talents for fiction and talents for weeping and smiling, no editor need be afraid of being quite poor, provided he does not become an honest man." For a biting article on the Prince Regent, which was Hunt's passionate protest against the extravagant eulogies of the sycophants, he was sent to prison. The problems of journalism in 1931 may be different in form, but in essence some of them are not new.

"Invention" of news is not always practised for high political purposes. Sometimes its object is to brighten up dull times. Not all these efforts have the happy ending of one which

was the theme of a story that went the rounds not long since. A news editor is reported to have complained that the messages of a local correspondent in an important port were dull, and asked for "some strong human stuff." On the quaysides, he suggested, there must be many good stories to be found. The correspondent, failing to discover them in actual fact, concocted a yarn about an engaged couple who were down on their luck and, as a last desperate resort, sold all the presents they had given each other and left as steerage passengers to try their fortune in New York. The story delighted the editor, who published it, complimented the correspondent, and awarded him a bonus, and told him that the New York correspondent had been instructed by cablegram to watch the adventures of the young couple when they arrived there. The inventor of the story was alarmed and awaited exposure and dismissal, but the day after the ship reached New York he was amazed and relieved to see in the paper a column interview with the mythical couple. Thus did the New World redress the balance of the Old!

### *Stories in Everything*

The news net is cast very widely nowadays; the journalist looks at life and sees stories in everything. Mr. Dooley says that sin is news, and with equal emphasis Mr. Hugh Redwood, who has written a remarkable book on "God in the Slums," claims that the Gospel is news. The churches themselves are awakening to the



HOME SUB-EDITORS OF "THE TIMES"



fact that they have something of interest to offer to the Press, and that the resultant publicity is of advantage to themselves. That good copy is to be found in religious subjects was demonstrated by Mr. Horace Thorogood in the *Evening Standard* in his articles on the many churches and sects of London. Churches, as well as societies innumerable, suffer from the ineptitude of their own propagandists, who do not know what the Press and the public want. They have not got the news sense; it is the work of the trained journalist to discover the things of real interest. The late Mr. G. E. Beer, after his retirement from the post of news editor of the *Daily Mail*, pointed out that the majority of English newspapers recognized that religious news is necessary to the making of a complete newspaper. "The greater portion of my journalistic life," he said, "was spent in organizing the obtaining of news, and I affirm that religious news is as much news, and is as eagerly read by many, as is political, commercial and sporting news."

It is equally true that crime and scandal have a strong "pull" in the news; hence we may find a "popular" paper taking for its splash story the adventures of a Hollywood star in preference to the serious and important events of the day. The public taste, of which this is a reflection, was recognized by Daniel Defoe, one of the first and most brilliant journalists. Referring to his "Moll Flanders" he wrote: "The moral 'tis hoped will keep the reader serious . . . there cannot be the same brightness and

beauty in relating the penitent part as is in the criminal part. . . . It is too true that the difference lies not in the real worth of the subject so much as in the gust and palate of the reader." A similar estimate of the public taste was formed by the writer of a "proposal for a printed newspaper," which Addison gave in the *Spectator* : "I have often thought that a *News-letter of Whispers*, written every Post and sent about the Kingdom . . . might be highly gratifying to the public, as well as beneficial to the author. By Whispers I mean those pieces of news which are communicated as Secrets, and which bring a double Pleasure to the Hearer ; first, as they are private History, and in the next place as they have always in them a Dash of Scandal. These are the two chief Qualifications in an Article of News, which recommend it in a more than ordinary manner to the Ears of the Curious."

The capacity for "picking up" news, which was the means of livelihood of the letter writers of the seventeenth century, has nowhere been better shown in later days than in the career of Delane. He was a great editor whose main interest in life was his paper and its leading articles, but he was also a keen collector of news. He had the habit of announcing big news in the leading article. Sir Edward Cook points out that the importance of Delane's first leader was not only in its focusing of public attention on *the* subject of the day, but—

The article was made of further importance in another way—a way which may seem strange and benighted to practitioners in the newest journalism. The article was the place, and the only place, in which the best news was given. . . . Great

excitement was caused by the announcement in *The Times* that Peel had resolved to repeal the Corn Laws. That piece of news was, in the language of American journalism, a "scoop" or a "beat" of the first order. It caused a great sensation; but no piece of news was ever given in a less sensational way. It appeared as the first paragraph of the first leader and nowhere else in the paper. . . . There was, as a rule, no display of such political news elsewhere; there were no headlines. If a comparable case be taken from *The Times* of a recent date, the contrast between the old method and the new will be made apparent. In July, 1914, *The Times* obtained exclusive possession of the news that King George had convened a Conference at Buckingham Palace in the hope of obtaining a settlement of the Irish question by consent. . . . The earlier announcement made the greater stir. But the later was made with the greater noise. There was, of course, a leading article on the subject, but the article was only comment. The announcement itself was made in a news column with loud headlines and in boldly displayed type.

Several instances are on record of Delane's smartness in getting news "scoops." I may mention a typical one. Meeting his doctor, Sir Richard Quain, at the Athenæum, Delane talked of the weather and the conversation went on to different climates and their effects on different constitutions. The doctor casually mentioned that he had been telling Lord Northbrook, in answer to a question, that a hot climate might suit a delicate girl very well. Next day it was announced in *The Times* that Lord Northbrook had been appointed Viceroy of India to succeed Lord Mayo. The new Viceroy was puzzled and had to declare in response to many congratulations that they were quite premature—"how *The Times* got hold of it I cannot imagine, for no one but myself and Gladstone have even discussed it." It was a clever piece of journalism judged even by the latest standards.



*An Exhortation*

As one who is now in the ranks of the veterans I may claim the privilege of a final exhortation. It shall be brief.

In your work as a journalist you have to look at the whole of life—its seamy side as well as its noble. Picture the great panorama in all its vivid contrasts, but preserve your standards of truth, decency, and goodness. You work in a calling which in its best forms was originally a public service but is now passing from the control of the craftsman to that of the financier. Time may bring a return to earlier ideals—who can tell?—but whatever the future may hold you will do well to remember that you have a public responsibility. The law of the land limits and controls the Press for the public safety and good; but beyond this there is a moral duty which cannot be evaded. Honesty is the best policy. The power of the Press in promoting national and international peace and well-being is unquestioned. In serving it strive to be “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.”

# APPENDIX I

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

THERE is a growing volume of literature about journalism, historical, biographical and vocational, which is extremely valuable and interesting to the student. In the preparation of this book I have been indebted to the following—

- "The Press," Sir Alfred Robbins (Benn).
- "Northcliffe," Hamilton Fyfe (Allen & Unwin).
- "My Northcliffe Diary," Tom Clarke (Gollancz).
- "From the City to Fleet Street," Hall Richardson (Paul).
- "A Traveller in News," Beach Thomas (Chapman & Hall).
- "The Book of Fleet Street," Pope (Cassell).
- "The Manchester Guardian," W. Haslam Mills (Chatto & Windus).
- "The Inky Way," Mrs. C. N. Williamson (Chapman & Hall).
- "News Writing," Spencer (Heath).
- "Modern Journalism," Carr and Stevens (Pitman).
- University of Missouri Bulletins.
- "Conditions of Life and Work of Journalists" (International Labour Office, Geneva, 1928).
- "Lord Northcliffe," Wilson (Benn).
- Borzoi Handbooks of Journalism—"Printing for the Journalist," Allen, and "What is News," Johnson (Knopf).
- "Friends and Adventures," "T" of *Punch* (Cape).
- "Fleet Street and Downing Street," Kennedy Jones (Hutchinson).
- "Delane," Cook (Constable).
- "Law of Torts," Fraser (Sweet & Maxwell).
- "Law for Journalists," Pilley (Pitman).
- "The Making of an Editor," W. L. Courtney (Macmillan).
- "The America of To-day," J. A. Spender (Benn).
- "Beaverbrook," F. A. Mackenzie (Jarrolds).
- "The Press and the Public," George Blake (Faber & Faber).
- "History of the New York Times," Davis (*New York Times*).
- "The Newspaper," Diblee (Williams & Norgate).
- "W. R. Hearst," Winkler (Cape).
- "Joseph Pulitzer," Seitz (Bles).
- Newspaper World*, London.
- World's Press News*, London.
- Editor and Publisher*, New York.



## APPENDIX II

### *SALARIES AND CONDITIONS*

THE following minimum rates of pay and conditions of work are embodied in agreements made between the National Union of Journalists and the various organizations of proprietors. Summaries are given first, showing the present position (1945), and the texts of agreements follow—

#### LONDON

London papers in membership with the Newspaper Proprietors' Association: For fully-qualified reporters and sub-editors, meaning those who have served in that capacity for a period of three or more years, and for creative artists after seven years' practical experience, inclusive of any period spent in art school, £9 9s. a week.

Press photographers: first and second year (improvers), £4 4s.; third and fourth year, £5 5s.; fifth year, £6 6s.; sixth and seventh year, £7 7s.; after seventh year, £8 8s.

To the above a war bonus is added, by agreement between the N.P.A. and the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, of 17s. 6d. for seniors and 7s. for juniors.

(Text of agreement, page 235, etc.)

#### LONDON NEWSPAPERS PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION

For journalists, creative artists and photographers employed on the editorial staffs working in the publishing offices in Manchester and Leeds, owned and controlled by members of the Association, weekly salaries as follows—

SENIORS: age 24 and over, with three years' experience, £8 15s. 6.

JUNIORS: age 16, £1 15s.; age 17, £2 8s. 3d.; age 18, £3 1s. 6d.; age 19, £3 18s. 6d.; age 20, £4 16s. 6d.; age 21, £5 14s. 0d.; age 22, £6 11s. 6d.; age 23, £7 9s.

War bonuses are incorporated in these rates.

(Text of agreement, pages 237-8.)

#### NEWS AGENCIES

(PRESS ASSOCIATION AND EXCHANGE TELEGRAPH CO.)

SENIORS: £8 8s.

JUNIORS (beginning service before nineteenth birthday): first full year of service, £2 2s.; second full year of service, £3 3s.; third full year of service, £4 4s.; fourth full year of service, £5 5s.; fifth full year of service, £6 6s.; sixth full year of service, £7 7s.

Juniors beginning in their twentieth year train for five years and start at £3 3s., and juniors beginning in their twenty-first year train for four years at £4 4s., rising by annual increments of £1 1s. In no case shall the training period be continued beyond the twenty-fifth birthday at less than £8 8s.

To these rates a war bonus of 17s. 6d. for seniors and 8s. for juniors is added.

#### REUTERS

First-year juniors who have reached the age of 21, £4 4s.; second-year juniors who have reached the age of 21, £5 5s.; third-year juniors who have reached the age of 21, £7 7s.; thereafter, for seniors of four years' experience, of which two at least have been with Reuters, £9 9s.

To these rates a war bonus of 17s. 6d. for seniors and 8s. for juniors is added.

(Text of agreement, page, 238, etc.)

#### NEWSPAPER SOCIETY

Provincial newspapers as in the following table -

age	A			B			C			D			E			F		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
18	1	13	6	1	15	6	1	17	0	1	18	6	2	1	0	2	3	0
19	2	4	6	2	7	0	2	9	6	2	11	0	2	14	6	2	17	0
20	2	15	6	2	19	0	3	2	0	3	4	0	3	8	0	3	11	6
21	3	6	6	3	10	6	3	14	6	3	16	6	4	1	6	4	5	6
22	4	3	6	4	8	0	4	13	0	4	15	6	5	2	0	5	7	0
23	4	14	6	5	0	0	5	5	6	5	8	6	5	15	6	6	1	0
24	5	11	0	5	17	6	6	4	0	6	7	6	6	16	0	7	2	6

A, weekly papers; B, weekly papers in places where daily papers are published; C, weekly papers within 12 miles of Charing Cross; D, daily papers published in towns of fewer than 100,000 inhabitants; E, daily papers published in towns of between 100,000 and 250,000 inhabitants; F, daily papers published in towns of more than 250,000 inhabitants.

An increase of 8s. 6d. per week became payable to seniors in Newspaper Society offices as from January, 1946. This should be added to the rates in the last line of above table. Appropriate increases are payable to those in the lower age groups.

(Text of agreement, page 241, etc.)

#### LONDON OFFICES OF PROVINCIAL DAILY PAPERS

ADULTS: first year's service in London, £8 14s. 6d.; second year's service in London, £9 5s.; third year's service in London, £9 15s. 6d.

JUNIORS: first year's service in London, £3 19s. 6d.; second year's service in London, £5 4s. 6d.; third year's service in London, £7 9s. 6d.

War bonuses are incorporated in these rates.

## LONDON LINAGE RATES

The Newspaper Proprietors' Association agrees to the following minimum payments to non-salaried correspondents for all general home news (not commercial, financial or sporting) sent by them and used in London papers: up to 60 words, a minimum of 2s. 6d.; all matter above 60 words to be paid for at the minimum rate of 2½d. for each eight words; headlines to be paid for at linage rate when provided by the correspondent and used.

## SCOTLAND

The English agreement with the Newspaper Society applies to union daily newspaper offices in membership with the Scottish Daily Newspaper Society.

## SCOTTISH WEEKLY NEWSPAPER PROPRIETORS' ASSOCIATION

Weekly papers—

SENIORS: age 24 and over, £5 11s.

JUNIORS: age 20, £2 15s. 6d.; age 21, £3 6s. 6d.; age 22, £4 3s. 6d.; age 23, £4 14s. 6d.

Weekly papers in places where daily papers are published—

SENIORS: age 24 and over, £5 17s. 6d.

JUNIORS: age 20, £2 19s.; age 21, £3 10s. 6d.; age 22, £4 8s.; age 23, £5.

(Text of agreement, page 244.)

## AGREEMENTS

## NEWSPAPER PROPRIETORS' ASSOCIATION

(16th March, 1921.)

## 1. GENERAL

It is agreed by the Newspaper Proprietors' Association and the National Union of Journalists that, as from the date of signing this Agreement, the following minimum rates of payment, maximum hours of labour and general conditions of employment for the exclusive full-time services of members of editorial staffs (including creative artists, press photographers and photographic printers\*) shall be recognized in the offices of all London newspapers owned and controlled by members of the Association.

## 2. MINIMUM SALARIES

No fully-qualified reporter or fully-qualified sub-editor (including members of Parliamentary corps), meaning reporter or sub-editor who has served in that capacity for a period of three or more years, shall be engaged or employed for exclusive full-time services at a salary of less than nine guineas per week [increased by war bonuses to £10 6s. 6d.], except on financial or sporting papers, in which cases the minimum salaries for such employment shall be eight guineas per week [increased by war bonuses to £9 5s. 6d.].

The granting of any increases to higher paid members of editorial staffs on account of merit shall, as heretofore, be left to the discretion of the employer.

## 3. PHOTOGRAPHERS

The following minimum weekly rates of payment shall be observed by members of the Association for the exclusive services of photographer pressmen, according to the years of service as photographers,

not necessarily in the same office: Photographer Pressmen: first and second year (improvers), £4 4s.; third and fourth year, £5 5s.; fifth year, £6 6s.; Sixth and seventh year, £7 7s.; after seventh year, £8 8s. Hours to be regulated by the general clause, but existing arrangements as to holidays and payments for additional working hours to continue.

#### 4. ARTISTS

No qualified creative artist, meaning an artist who works on materials other than stone or metals, but who may be called upon to touch up, shall be engaged or employed after seven years' practical experience—inclusive of any period spent in art school—at a salary of less than nine guineas per week.

#### 5. SPECIAL DAY ENGAGEMENTS

Saturday or other special day engagements for Sunday papers, by reporters or sub-editors, shall be paid for at the rate of not less than £2 2s. for a reasonable working day.

Duty after Saturday midnight, on Sunday papers published after 6 a.m., to be paid for at the minimum rate of £3 3s. for a reasonable working day.

#### 6. HOURS OF WORK AND HOLIDAYS

For all members of editorial staffs a full working week shall consist of not more than five and a half nights of seven hours each, including meal times (total of 38½ hours), for regular night workers, or five and a-half days of eight hours each, including meal times (total of 44 hours), for day workers. Reporters' hours in general practice not to exceed 44 hours in each week, unless necessitated by out-of-town engagements.

This weekly half-day leave shall be granted to night workers as one full night's leave in each fortnight, or two full nights' leave in each four weeks at the discretion of the management. The existing practice of at least one full day off in compensation for the long hours worked on Saturday for Sunday publications shall continue undisturbed by this agreed extra half-holiday.

All members of editorial staffs shall be entitled to at least three weeks' holiday, with pay, annually in the six months from 1st May to 31st October, also two days' leave at or near Christmas time, and one day in lieu of Good Friday. In the case of sporting and financial papers the time for holidays shall be fixed by arrangement with the management.

#### 7. PARLIAMENTARY WORK

*Extra Turns:* Morning papers (per day or part of day), £1 11s. 6d. Evening papers (per afternoon, except when House meets at noon or earlier), £1 1s. Evening papers (when House meets at noon or earlier), £1 11 6s.

A week shall consist of not more than five days. When Parliament sits on a sixth day in any week, note-takers working on that day shall be granted an equivalent day's relief or pay.

#### 8. SPACE WORK

Journalists employed solely on space rates on general newspapers shall receive not less than £1 1s. for any one assignment, but may be required to carry out more than one engagement within a reasonable

working day for the same fee. This clause shall not apply to occasional contributors to sporting papers.

After three months' probation, the reporter (fully qualified as in clause 2) who has been employed daily and regularly on space rates shall be guaranteed a minimum of nine guineas weekly for his exclusive full-time services.

This Agreement shall be binding upon both parties for twelve months from the date of signing the Agreement, and shall be terminable thereafter by three months' notice from either side.

\* Since the making of this agreement photographic printers have been transferred to the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants.

## LONDON NEWSPAPERS' PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION

(19th July, 1944)

### 1. EMPLOYERS COVERED

This agreement shall apply to journalists, creative artists, and photographers employed on the editorial staffs working in the publishing offices in Manchester and Leeds owned and controlled by members of the Association.

### 2. MINIMUM SALARIES

**DAILY PAPERS—Seniors.** The minimum salary for the exclusive full-time services on a daily paper of a member of the Union (of either sex) covered by this agreement who has attained the age of 24 years and has served for three years or more in one or other of the capacities named in Clause 1 shall be eight pounds fifteen shillings and sixpence per week (this minimum incorporates the war bonuses granted prior to the date of the agreement).

**Juniors.** The scale of payment for junior members, based approximately on the percentages of the senior rate shown below, shall be—

Age 16, per week £1 15s. (approx. percentage of senior rate, 20);  
age 17, per week £2 8s. 3d. (approx. percentage of senior rate, 27½);  
age 18, per week £3 1s. 6d. (approx. percentage of senior rate, 35);  
age 19, per week £3 18s. 6. (approx. percentage of senior rate, 45);  
age 20, per week £4 16s. 6d. (approx. percentage of senior rate, 55);  
age 21, per week £5 14s. (approx. percentage of senior rate, 65);  
age 22, per week £6 11s. 6d. (approx. percentage of senior rate, 75);  
age 23, per week £7 9s. (approx. percentage of senior rate, 85).

### 3. JUNIORS—RATIO

Juniors may be appointed, on a ratio not exceeding one junior to four seniors.

### 4. HOURS

**DAILY PAPERS.** For members of editorial staffs on daily papers the full working fortnight in the case of a sub-editor or creative artist shall consist of not more than eleven days or nights, totalling eighty hours including meal times. In the case of a reporter or photographer shall normally consist of not more than eleven days or nights, totalling eighty hours including meal times; but he (or she) may be required to work additional hours, which, however, unless necessitated by out of town engagements, shall not bring the total hours to more than eighty-eight per fortnight.



## 5. SUNDAY PAPERS

For engagements of seniors on Sunday papers the minimum salary shall be three guineas for a day or night of eight hours (including meal times) extra payment at the rate of 8s. per hour to be made for time worked beyond eight hours. Such regular engagements shall be subject to a month's notice on either side.

Notwithstanding Clause 8 of this agreement employers shall have the right to call upon members of the Union engaged for Sunday paper production to work the eight hours as stipulated, or to reduce the present hours worked in excess of eight hours to eight hours, provided that by so doing no member shall suffer a reduction in his pay.

## 6. HOLIDAYS

Members of the Union covered by this agreement shall be entitled to an annual holiday with pay as follows —

DAILY PAPERS after six months' service: seniors—three weeks, juniors—two weeks.

SUNDAY PAPERS: If they have worked for twenty-five Saturdays —two Saturdays. Not less than twelve but not more than twenty-four Saturdays—one Saturday.

## 7. DISPUTES

Any dispute as to the terms of this agreement or as to any question arising under it shall at the request of either side be referred to a joint committee consisting of the Technical Committee of the Association (or four nominees of it) and the Union (or four nominees of it); and in the event of their failure to arrive at agreement the matter shall be referred to the Council of the Association and the Executive Committee of the Union, who failing to reach agreement shall refer the matter for settlement through conciliation machinery to be agreed between the parties. Pending such reference and decision no hostile action shall be taken by either side.

## 8. BETTER CONDITIONS

Any member of an editorial staff who at the time of the signing of this agreement had a salary or condition superior to those provided herein shall not be affected adversely as a result of this agreement.

## 9. PERIOD AND STABILIZATION

This agreement shall have effect from the 24th July, 1944, subject to six months' notice of termination by either party, but it is agreed that the Stabilization Clause of the agreement between the London Newspapers Provincial Association and the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation of 2nd December, 1943, shall be held as binding and that the adjustment of anomalies provided for in that clause shall be deemed to have been affected by this agreement.

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**NEWS AGENCIES**

AGREEMENT of 31st March, 1922, made with The Press Association Limited, The Central News Limited, and the Exchange Telegraph Company Limited.

## GENERAL REPORTERS AND SUB-EDITORS

1. *Minimum Rates of Payment*

No fully qualified reporter or sub-editor of 24 years or over who has been serving in such capacity or capacities for at least three years shall be engaged at a salary of less than £8 8s. a week (increased by War bonuses to £9 5s. 6d.) for exclusive full-time service during the recognized hours of labour as set out in Clauses 2 and 3.

2. *Hours of Work and Holidays*

A full working week in London shall consist of not more than 5½ days of eight hours each, including meal time (total of 44 hours a week). A reporter who is employed out of London on a seventh day in any week shall receive a day off, or alternatively, at the discretion of the management, a full day's pay.

The weekly half-day leave may be given as one full day's leave in each two weeks.

At least three weeks' holiday, with pay, shall be given annually to each member who has been employed for twelve months, in the six months from 1st May to 31st October; extra days' leave being given in each office at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun at the discretion of the management.

Members who have not served 12 months shall have holidays as follows: after 6 months' service, 10 days; after 7 months' service, 11 days; after 8 months' service, 12 days; after 9 months' service, 14 days; after 10 months' service, 15 days; after 11 months' service, 17 days. Sundays are included in these holidays. The sporting staffs' holiday may be arranged to be given at any time in the year.

3. *Work Beyond Normal Hours, and Special Duties*

Where a member is required to work after his normal day of eight hours, he shall receive an allowance (excluding travelling expenses, 'phones, etc.) of not less than 3s. 6d. for each occasion on which he is retained beyond one and a half hours, 7s. 6d. if retained beyond three hours, and 10s. 6d. if retained beyond four hours.

Where a member is required to work in London on a seventh day in any week he shall receive not less than a full day's pay (i.e. two-elevenths of his regular weekly salary), or, alternatively, at the discretion of the management, a day off.

Where a member is required to assist in Parliament beyond his normal hours he shall receive special payment of not less than 7s. for each occasion on which he is retained beyond one and a half hours, and if retained beyond four hours not less than 15s.

4. *Expenses*

Subsistence expenses of not less than £1 5s. per day shall be paid to members required to be out of London overnight; and not less than 12s. 6d. per day out of town.

## JUNIORS

5. *Training Period and Rates of Pay*

The period of training of juniors engaged and beginning service before their nineteenth birthday shall not exceed six years from the date of their engagement, and the following minimum weekly rates shall be paid: first full year of service, £2 2s.; second full year of service, £3 3s.; third full year of service, £4 4s.; fourth full year of

service, £5 5s.; fifth full year of service, £6 6s.; sixth full year of service, £7 7s.

A junior whose services are retained after completion of the full period of six years shall be paid the minimum salary of £8 8s.

For juniors who begin their training in their twentieth year the maximum training period shall be five years, beginning at a weekly salary of £3 3s. and rising by annual increments of £1 1s.; and for those beginning in their twenty-first year the training period shall not exceed four years, the rate of pay beginning at £4 4s. and rising by annual increments of £1 1s. a week.

In no case shall the training period be continued beyond the twenty-fifth birthday at less than £8 8s.

The number of juniors employed shall not exceed 15 per cent of the total number of general and sporting reporters and sub-editors. (Parliamentary and Law Court Staffs not to be included as a basis for this percentage computation.) No agency shall employ more than eight juniors at any one time.

A junior employed at 31st March, 1922, may be required to serve one more year as a junior than he would have done had the agreement of 9th January, 1920, remained in force.

There shall be no reduction of salary as a consequence of this agreement.

#### PARLIAMENTARY STAFF

##### 6. *Minimum Rates of Payment*

No reporter shall be employed at less than eight guineas a week.

##### 7. *Hours of Work and Holidays*

Members of staffs shall be guaranteed a minimum of forty weeks' engagement in the year ending 31st December, 1922, and shall be required to work, when Parliament is in Session, on parliamentary work only and on such days only as Parliament may be sitting.

A full working week shall consist normally of not more than five days, but where either House meets on a Saturday a member may be required to attend.

Where a sitting extends beyond 2 a.m. each member retained shall receive not less than 10s. 6d. on each such occasion.

Three weeks' holiday, including the ordinary Easter and Whitsun recesses, shall be given with pay during the period of engagement to each member, extending, if necessary, the period of engagement beyond the forty weeks guaranteed in order to carry this out.

#### LAW COURTS STAFF

##### 8. *Minimum Rates of Payment*

A reporter engaged to supply Law Courts reports exclusively for an agency shall receive at least minimum rate, including commission, of eight guineas a week,<sup>1</sup> or thirty-two guineas in each four weeks, or *pro rata*. Under this system of payment adjustment may be made at the end of each four weeks during which the Courts are sitting, and where on the average of four weeks the minimum of thirty-two guineas has not been earned, the difference between the amount of actual earnings received and thirty-two guineas shall be paid to the members concerned.

The rates of commission, which shall be calculated on a basis of a 1,600 word column, shall be as follows—

Press Association, Ltd., 12s. per column of 1,600 words, and 3s. for each duplicated column.

Exchange Telegraph Co., Ltd., and Central News, Ltd., 15s. per column of 1,600 words, and 7s. 6d. for each duplicated column.

A minimum of 2s. 6d. for each paragraph, and a proportion for duplicates, shall be paid.

Members of staffs shall be engaged for forty-two weeks in each year (i.e. excluding the long vacation), and shall be required to work on Law Courts duties only.

<sup>1</sup> By agreement of July, 1935, the minimum was raised to eight and a half guineas a week, except for first year men in the Courts, who for that period may be paid eight guineas. At the end of twelve months they also become entitled to eight and a half guineas.

#### SPORTING STAFF

9. The conditions laid down in Clauses 1, 2, 3, and 4 for general reporters and sub-editors shall apply.

#### SPACEMEN

##### 10. *Minimum Rates of Payment*

A spaceman who is assigned a London engagement shall be paid not less than 7s. 6d. for any such engagement undertaken for that agency only, and where the value of the copy merits it the management shall mark it accordingly at a higher rate.

If he is assigned one or more engagements, the pursuit of which requires that he be occupied for that agency only for a working day of eight hours (meal times included), he shall receive not less than £1 11s. 6d. for each such day.

#### GENERAL

##### 11. *Period of Agreement*

This agreement shall take effect as from 31st March, 1922, and shall, with the exception of the clause relating to parliamentary staffs, continue in force for one year, and thereafter may be terminated by three months' notice on either side.

#### BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

On 6th April, 1937, the British Broadcasting Corporation agreed with representatives of the Union that the London newspaper minimum rate of £9 9s. a week should be applicable in principle to its two news departments as well as to the *Radio Times*.

#### PROVINCES AND LONDON SUBURBS

##### THE NEWSPAPER SOCIETY

(22nd March, 1921)

Clause 1 of this agreement was amended on the 1st September, 1944, by the addition of rates covering London suburban papers.

The various rates are given in the table headed "Newspaper Society," on page 234.

2. These rates are standard minimum rates, and nothing in this agreement precludes employers paying more than these rates. Salaries paid above the minima are not to be considered standard rates.

3. These minimum rates to apply to members of the National Union of Journalists, irrespective of sex, who have attained the age of 23 and who have earned their living as journalists on morning, evening, or weekly newspapers for three years. (*See below for modification of this clause.*)

4. Nothing in this agreement shall be held to necessitate the increase of existing salaries which are higher than those herein laid down, but the granting of any increases to higher paid members on account of merit shall be left to the discretion of the employers.

5. An employee in an office publishing daily and weekly papers shall be paid at the daily paper rate.

6. The minimum of district representatives (excluding London representatives of provincial papers) shall not be more than 5s. a week less than the minimum of his head office. Where the district rate is higher than the head office rate the district representative shall be paid at least the head office rate.

7. These rates shall be retrospective to 26th January, 1921. (This does not apply to the Suburban London rates which have effect from 1st September, 1944.)

8. A Standing Joint Committee of five representatives from each organization shall be formed to discuss any question of difficulty arising out of this Agreement, or any grievance which an employee or group of employees may have, provided that a statement as to such grievance has been forwarded to the employer concerned, either by the members themselves or by an official of the Union acting on their behalf, and satisfactory agreement has been unattainable. This Committee shall be called together as and when required by the respective secretaries, and shall meet within 28 days of either side notifying the other of its desire for a meeting and the particular grounds upon which it is desired.

The Scottish Daily Newspaper Society, on behalf of the Union daily newspaper offices in its membership, hereby agree to follow the foregoing Agreement as if it had been made between the Scottish Daily Newspaper Society and the National Union of Journalists.

Clause 7 above does not, of course, apply to the London Suburban rates, which had effect from 1st September, 1944.

SUPPLEMENTARY AGREEMENT, May, 1924, rescinding Clause 3 of agreement dated 22nd March, 1921, and substituting the following—

[Clauses 2 and 3 (b) and (c) of this agreement were amended on 1st September, 1944, by the addition of ages 18 and 19 to scale and consequential changes.]

1. The minimum rates provided under the main agreement shall apply to members of the N.U.J. irrespective of sex, who have attained the age of 24, and who have earned their living as journalists on morning, evening, and weekly newspapers for four years, except as otherwise provided for in the following clause numbered 3.

2. There shall be a junior scale as follows—

At age 18, not less than 30 per cent of the rates provided in Clause 1; 19, 40 per cent; 20, 50 per cent; 21, 60 per cent; 22, 75 per cent; 23, 85 per cent.

3. (a) A junior, to be entitled to these scales, shall have had two years' experience in a newspaper office, of which at least one year shall have been on the journalistic staff, or shall have continued his education until entering journalism.

(b) A junior entering journalism from some other trade or profession at over the age of 18 shall serve a probationary period of six months at 25 per cent of the minimum wage applicable at the age of 24, and shall then, if retained, receive the scale rate of his age as set out above.

(c) The salaries of learners up to the age of 18 shall be arranged between the learner and the employer.

4. Nothing in this agreement shall be disadvantageous to any member of a staff who at the time of the agreement coming into force is being paid at higher rates than those provided by the scale.

5. This agreement shall not apply to any junior who during the year 1924, under the agreement of 22nd March, 1921, at the age of 23 qualifies for the journalist's wages.

6. Nothing in this agreement shall affect any existing agreement in the nature of an indenture between a newspaper proprietor and a journalistic pupil.

The Scottish Daily Newspaper Society, on behalf of the Union daily newspaper offices in its membership, agrees to follow the foregoing agreement, as if it had been made between the Scottish Daily Newspaper Society and the National Union of Journalists.

### PROVINCIAL PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS

By an agreement dated 11th July, 1934, Press photographers are recognized as journalists. A fully-qualified Press photographer, i.e. one employed by a newspaper wholly or mainly for the purpose of photographic work, who has attained the age of 24, and has earned his living as a Press photographer on newspaper work for not less than four years, is entitled to the senior rate of wage specified in Clause 1 of the agreement of March, 1921 (page 241). The agreement also provides for junior rates, a limit to the proportion of juniors on a staff, and other matters.

### HOURS AND HOLIDAYS

MEMORANDUM passed between the Newspaper Society and the Union, 18th June, 1930.

1. Every journalist shall be entitled normally to one and a half days a week or three days a fortnight free from duty of any description. Sunday may be one of the days. The half-day off shall begin not later than 1 p.m., and shall continue until the usual hour of beginning on the following day. The application of this principle shall be subject to local accommodation.

2. The above is the statement of a principle, and the Newspaper Society is prepared to endeavour to adjust any alleged departures from the principle in any office by the following method: that the President and General Secretary of the Newspaper Society (in association with the President and General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists) will use their influence in connection with all such alleged departures of which details are submitted to them.

3. The Newspaper Society confirms the principle that every journalist is entitled to an annual holiday with pay.

### RATIO OF JUNIORS

An agreement between the Newspaper Society and the N.U.J., of 16th March, 1929, stipulates that each learner entering a newspaper office shall serve a probationary period of six months before he becomes an indentured apprentice; before the end of that time the employer shall review the position in the light of a report from the chief of the journalistic staff and decide whether or not the

junior shall continue in his journalistic employment. Limits are laid to the number of juniors to be employed, and employers and members of the Union are bound to endeavour to give every learner the best available practical training.

### WEEKLY PAPERS AND PERIODICALS

The following Union rates are recommended by the Weekly Newspaper and Periodical Proprietors' Association, London, to its members—

	<i>Per Week</i>		
	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Editors and Sub-editors with editorial control . . . . .	8	8	—
Chief Sub-editors . . . . .	7	7	—
Sub-editors and reporters . . . . .	6	6	—

### SCOTTISH NEWSPAPER PROPRIETORS' ASSOCIATION

The Scottish Newspaper Proprietors' Association agreed to recommend to its members the adoption of the following—

1. As from 1st January, 1944, the minimum salaries shall be: (see table headed Scotland, page 235.)

2. These minimum rates to apply to members of the National Union of Journalists, irrespective of sex, who have attained the age of 24 and who have earned their living as journalists on morning, evening, or weekly newspapers for four years, except as otherwise provided for in Clause 5.

3. The minimum salaries for juniors shall be (see table, page 235). These rates shall be paid to journalists employed on papers of 5,000 circulation or more, and on a paper of smaller circulation which is one of a number under the same ownership where the cumulo circulation is more than 5,000.

4. A junior to be entitled to these scales shall have had two years' experience in a newspaper office of which at least one year shall have been on the journalistic staff, or shall have continued his education until entering journalism.

5. A person entering journalism from some other trade or profession at over the age of 19½ shall serve a probationary period of six months at 25 per cent of the minimum wage applicable at the age of 24, and shall then, if retained, receive the scale rate of his age.

6. These rates are standard minimum rates, and nothing in this agreement precludes employers paying more than these rates. Salaries paid above the minima are not to be considered standard rates.

7. Nothing in this agreement shall be held to necessitate the increase of existing salaries which are higher than those herein laid down, but the granting of any increases to higher paid members on account of merit shall be left to the discretion of the employers. Nothing in this agreement shall be disadvantageous to any member of the staff who at the time of the agreement coming into force is being paid at higher rates than those provided in the agreement.

8. A Standing Joint Committee of five representatives from each organization shall be formed to discuss any question of difficulty arising out of this agreement or any grievance which an employee

or group of employees may have, provided that a statement as to such grievance has been forwarded to the employer concerned, either by the members themselves or an official of the Union acting on their behalf, and satisfactory agreement has been unattainable. This Committee shall be called together as and when required by the respective secretaries, and shall meet within twenty-eight days of either side notifying the other of its desire for a meeting and the particular grounds upon which it is desired.



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